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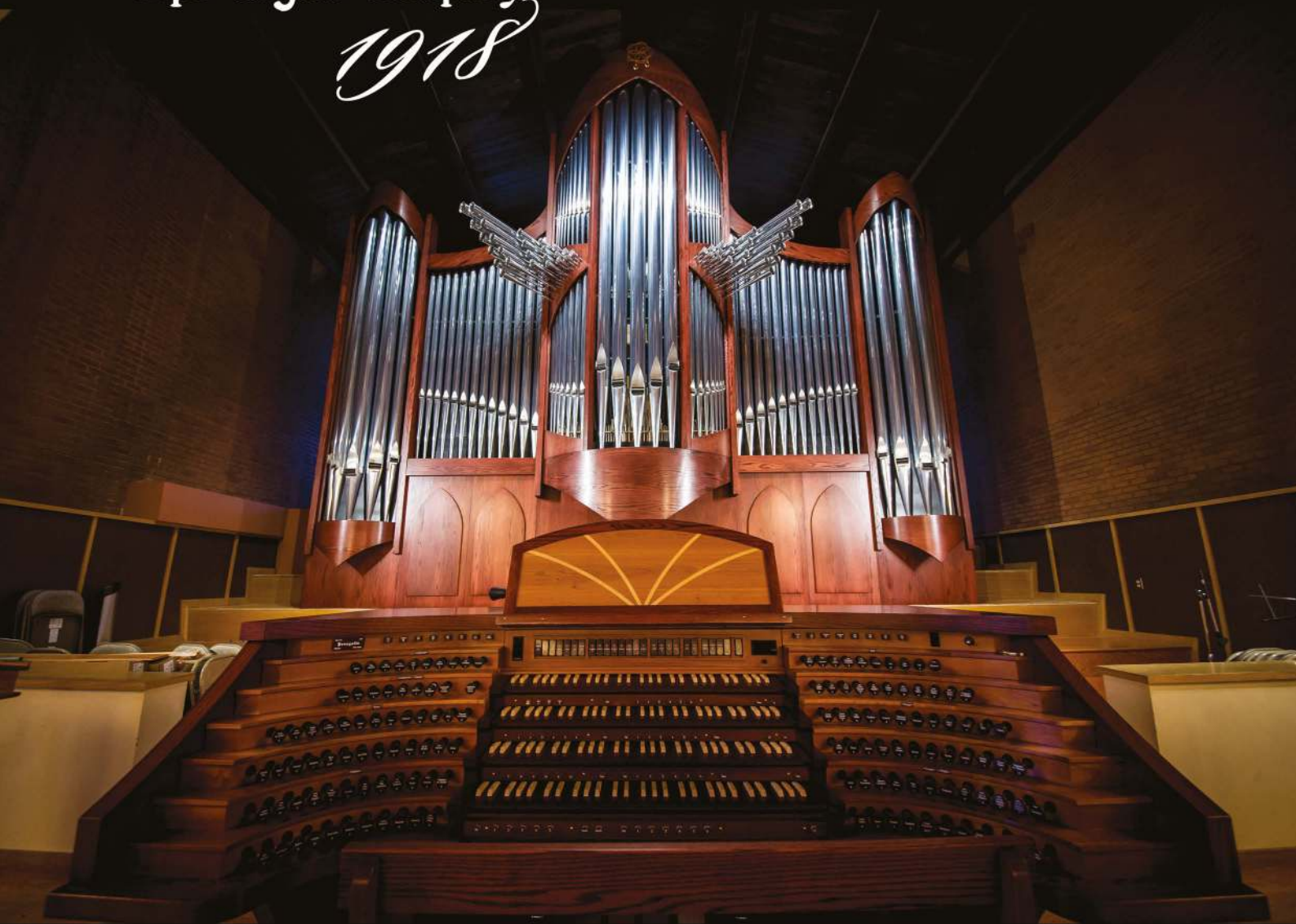


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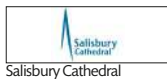
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THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX



TOM ASKEW-MILLER

The term 'a free spirit' has been so overused that it has lost much of its impact; but if one man epitomised the essence of the expression, it would be Jean Guillou, with whose death on 26 January the organ world lost a great original thinker. Whether or not one agreed with his interpretation of standard classics of the organ repertoire, there is no doubt that he set people thinking and talking about his at times unorthodox approach, his extraordinary improvisations and transcriptions, and his own compositions. It took a particularly liberated mind to conceive *La Révolte des Orgues*, for nine organs and percussion dispersed around whatever arena it is performed in, immersing the audience in total surround-sound. But for Guillou it was not so much that he deliberately crossed boundaries – he simply didn't see them in the first place. His philosophy could perhaps best be summed up in two words: why not?

Life, they say, is what happens while you're busy making other plans. And it is Guillou's kind of thinking outside the box that has enabled humankind to adapt and survive over the millennia. It is established fact that the arts are the best media for encouraging and developing lateral thinking – which makes it all the more lamentable that they have been omitted from the EBacc (English Baccalaureate). A report published in January 2019 by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Music Education in collaboration with the University of Sussex and the Incorporated Society of Musicians underlines its 'devastating effect on music education'. The report makes the usual case for the importance of music for individuals and society (deep sigh: why are we *always* having to justify our subject?), and cites government data showing a drop of more than 20% in GCSE music entries since 2014/15, and a fall of over 1,000 secondary school music teachers. Where music is still taught in schools (and one in five have now dropped the subject entirely), time allocated to it is reduced – at Key Stage 3 (ages 11-14), there has been a drop of 26.7% since 2010.

The frankly ignorant and short-sighted approach taken by a government that supposedly places a value on 'choice' is in fact narrowing the scope of children's development, both intellectual and psychological. So instead of always having to fight for the inclusion of music in education, let's turn the question on its head and challenge the government: why not?

MAGGIE HAMILTON, EDITOR

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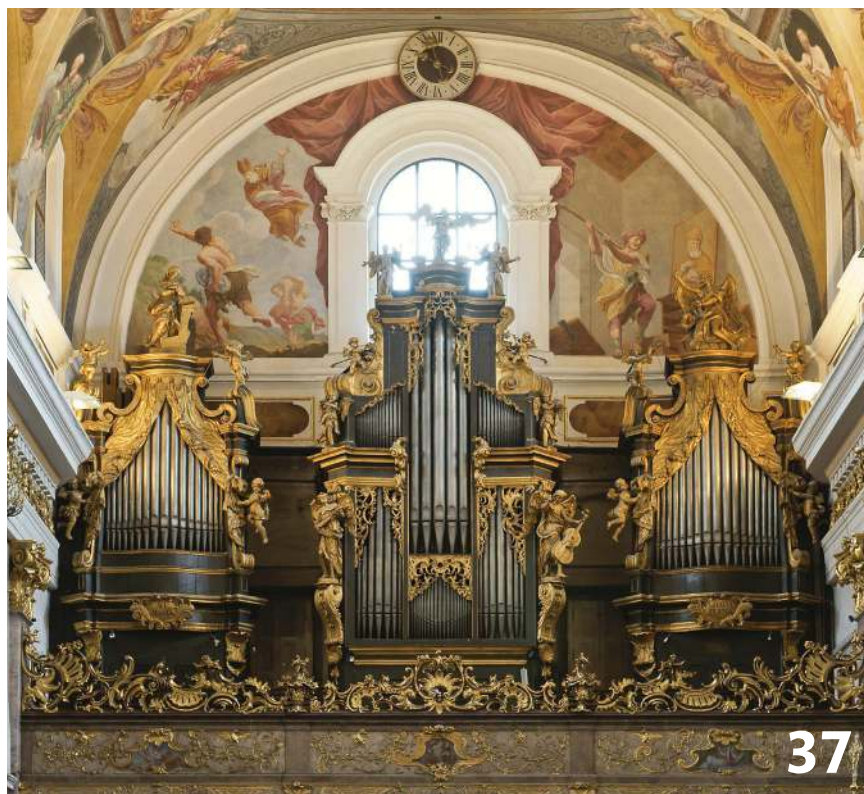
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'Very rewarding': Peter Wright reflects on 30 years at Southwark Cathedral.

'He created a desire such that you *wanted* him to succeed'

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DEVELOPMENTS IN DEVONSHIRE



BUCKFAST ABBEY

▲ Devon cream: young choristers at Buckfast

BUCKFAST ABBEY IN DEVON, UK, is offering the opportunity for up to 25 boys and girls aged 7-11 to be part of its Choral Foundation. The initiative is being undertaken in partnership with St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Buckfast.

The first intake of choristers was recruited in the summer term of 2018 and began rehearsing for the first time in September. The choristers are singing with the lay clerks of the Abbey choir at some of the services as well as performing at several concerts throughout the year.

Each chorister receives a scholarship from the Abbey for individual vocal, piano and theory tuition with the Abbey's

professional tutor. They will also work towards singing and theory exams for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music.

Matthew Searles, assistant master of the music at Buckfast Abbey, told *C&O*: 'The expansion of the Abbey's Choral Foundation to include choristers is a truly exciting development. Not only is this a unique musical opportunity for local Catholic children, it also forms part of the Abbey's broader commitment to the evangelisation of the faith. I am very proud of the progress our new choristers have already made and look forward to their increasing participation in the Abbey's liturgies.'

► The Abbey has also announced the appointment of David Davies as its new organist. Davies trained as an organist, pianist and conductor at Magdalen College, Oxford, and at the Institute of Sacred Music at Yale University in the United States. He has held church and cathedral appointments both in the USA and in the UK, most recently as organist and assistant director of music at Exeter Cathedral.

Davies will have charge of Buckfast Abbey's two recently installed organs, the first to be designed and built in the UK by the Italian firm Fratelli Ruffatti. The installation consists of a substantial Quire organ (four divisions and pedal), located on both sides of the Quire and the upper triforium; and a Cavaillé-Coll-style Grand-Orgue in the west gallery (two divisions and pedal). The Quire organ accompanies the singing of Gregorian chant by the monks and the repertoire of sacred music by the Abbey Choir, and has an Italian renaissance-inspired Positivo division, with a number of special effects, including a Nightingale, Zimbelstern, Glockenspiel, Drum and Bagpipes. The Grand-Orgue – located in the west gallery – leads the congregational singing. The divisions are controlled separately and together by a fixed four-manual console in the west gallery and a moveable one in the Quire.

APPOINTMENTS & AWARDS

The Bach Choir's music director, **David Hill**, and **Stephen Darlington**, former director of music at Christ Church, Oxford, received MBEs for services to music in HM The Queen's New Year's Honours list.

Richard Egarr is to succeed Nicholas McGegan as music director of the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Chorale (PBO) in San Francisco.

Dr William McVicker has been made an Honorary Research Fellow at the Royal Academy of Music; a bursary will enable him to undertake a series of visits to allow completion of a book to be entitled *A New History of the Tonal Architecture and Music of the British Organ*.

The NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants) Foundation has presented composer and conductor **Eric Whitacre** with its SupportMusic Champion Award for music education advocacy.

The Birmingham-based choir Ex Cathedra has announced **Sarah Latto** and **Tori Longdon** as its first two associate conductors.

German label **Audite** has won an International Classical Music Award (ICMA) in the choral category for its recording of Prokofiev's *October Revolution Cantata* conducted by Kirill Karabits, with the Staatskapelle Weimar and the Ernst Senff Chor.

The 2019 European Church Music Prize of €5,000 is to be awarded to **John Rutter** for his lifetime's contribution to the genre.

The Royal College of Organists has awarded its highest honour – the RCO Medal – to **Hans Fagius** and **Nicolas Kynaston**. Both were cited for 'distinguished achievement in organ playing'.

The Three Choirs Festival has appointed **Lucy Wilcox** to the new role of learning and participation manager, working across all three cities.

Sussex Chorus (formerly Ditchling Choral Society) has appointed **Jack Thompson** as its new director of music.

IMMORTAL, INVISIBLE

MATT BRODIE



▲ I Fagiolini - connecting with Leonardo's imagery

'SHAPING THE INVISIBLE' is a major new touring and recording initiative conceived by Robert Hollingworth's vocal group, I Fagiolini, with Leonardo da Vinci expert Prof. Martin Kemp. Taking its title from Leonardo's description of music, the project marks the 500th anniversary of the artist's death, and the 50th of both the Moon landing, and Concorde's maiden flight.

Around the Leonardo anniversary itself, I Fagiolini and Prof. Kemp will open the National Geographic Science Festival in Rome with the Italian premiere of 'Shaping the Invisible' (8 Apr) before returning to the UK for the release of the album in a new collaboration with The Sixteen's label, CORO, on 26 April.

Hollingworth commented: 'Leonardo da Vinci was a talented musician. Inspired by his description of music, our multi-

disciplinary project features projections of Da Vinci's best-loved masterworks interwoven with choral masterpieces that on some level connect with the images. Martin and I put the two art-forms into context, looking at how image and music can be viewed and heard, each through the prism of the other.'

The programme includes music by Tallis, Howells, Victoria, Bach, Monteverdi, Rubbra, Janequin, Daniel-Lesur and Josquin des Prez, and a new commission, using the project's title, on a theme of Leonardo and scientific endeavour, with poetry by Gillian Clarke and music by Adrian Williams. Tour dates include RNCM Manchester (12 Mar), Milton Court, Barbican, London (28 Apr), St George's, Bristol (2 May) and Purbeck Arts Week (1 Jun). www.ifagiolini.com

The Durham-based firm of Harrison & Harrison has dismantled Salisbury Cathedral's 19th-century Father Willis organ as part of a year-long restoration project costing £700,000 – the first major work on the instrument for nearly 50 years. Harrison's team leader Ian Bruce told C&O, 'Salisbury Cathedral's Father Willis is regarded by many as one of the finest pipe organs in the country, and even Willis himself is said to have considered it to be his best. It's the high-quality workmanship and the way it is all put together. Removing it has its challenges, because the components and pipes are packed into a very small space.' Assistant director of music John Challenger (pictured, with the display pipes) added, 'The Salisbury instrument is perfectly designed for the building, and has an immense vivacity of sound which is always arresting, exciting and alive. Over the years Cathedral musicians responsible for the organ have always been very protective, preventing it from undergoing potentially harmful "improvements". The aim has always been to allow the public to hear it as it was intended, a Victorian masterpiece.'



ASH MILLS

IN BRIEF

The opening up of **Cornwall International Male Choral Festival's** 2018 Composers' Competition to international entries attracted submissions from China, Taiwan, Russia, Brazil, North America, Oceania, as well as Europe. Seattle-based Kari Cruver Medina won first prize in the adult category, with second and third prizes going to Norwegian Jens Peter Jongepier and 2014 winner Ian Assersohn (UK), who also won the Cambiata category prize. The winning pieces can be heard at the 2019 Festival, which runs from 2-6 May. www.cimcf.uk

A bequest from a much-missed member of the **Addison Singers**, Cathy Bereznicki, has enabled the choir to commission three new works: Michael Berkeley's *Magdalena*, a choir-and-organ setting of a text concerned with the life of Mary Magdalene (premiere 30 Mar); choir alto Zillah Myers's composition for choir and piano, based on Joseph Addison's poem *The Spacious Firmament* (13 Jul); and Howard Goodall's new work for chorus and orchestra, *The Gravity of Kindness – A Christmas Meditation*, which will include a setting of a poem by the Palestinian poet Naomi Shihab Nye (7 Dec). The Addison Singers perform at St Peter's Church in Acton Green, West London. www.addisonsingers.com

ORA Singers, led by Suzi Digby OBE, have launched a website – **Composer Create** – designed to lead an aspiring choral composer through the compositional process from conception to confidence. The new resource holds an elaborate mix of worksheets, videos, musical snippets, expert advice and director's notes, all free and accessible worldwide. Professional input is provided by members of the choir, music professionals and commissioned composers Janet Wheeler, Richard Allain, Harry Escott and Oliver Tarney. www.composercreate.com

FORTHCOMING EVENTS



INSPIRING CHORAL LEADERSHIP

Advanced Course

9 & 10 Mar, St Botolph-without-Aldgate Church, London EC3N 1AB

Observer places are available at the final weekend sessions of this course led by Peter Broadbent, Sarah Tenant-Flowers and Amy Bebbington, for those operating at a high level of conducting.

abcd members £35, non-members £45

Cambiata North West

10 Feb, Cheadle Hulme School, Cheshire
Keeping boys singing – workshop and concert for boys in Years 6-13 led by Ian Crawford.

Contact Andy Brooke, cambiatanw@gmail.com

Singing Day with Bob Chilcott

9 Mar, The King's School, Chester
Enjoy a day of singing with composer and conductor Bob Chilcott on a variety of his works, including *Five Days that changed the World*, *Like a Singing Bird* and *Evening Hymn*.

abcd members £12, non-members £20, students £10. Group booking also available.

Foundation/Leading the Singing Conducting Courses

27 Apr, 25 May, 22 Jun, 20 Jul (4 one-day sessions), The Hall School, London
Designed for those who are new to singing leadership, or who have conducted for a while and now want to back up their practical experience with training.

www.abcd.org.uk/events/abcd-events

FRIENDLY COMPETITION



COURTESY ST ALBANS CATHEDRAL

▲ The organ of St Albans Cathedral

THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS for the 30th St Albans International Organ Competitions is imminent: 22 March.

Attractions to prospective performers for the 2019 event include: a new commission from UK composer Matthew Martin; the Tournemire Prize for improvisation; first, second, and audience awards for interpreters; the Peter Hurford Bach Prize; the Matthew Martin prize for the best performance of the commissioned work; the Douglas May award; a semi-

final round on the restored 1735 Richard Bridge organ in Christ Church, Spitalfields; a concerto final in St Albans Cathedral, directed by James O'Donnell; interpretation and improvisation finals on St Albans Cathedral's Harrison & Harrison organ.

This year's judges, who traditionally give concerts and masterclasses during the Festival, include Ken Cowan (US), Maurizio Croci (IT), Franz Danksagmüller (DE/AT), Hans-Ola Ericsson (SE/CA), Christophe Mantoux (FR), Dong-ill Shin (KR) and Thomas Trotter (GB).

Encouraging applications, artistic director David Titterington said, 'For more than half a century, the very special atmosphere that surrounds the festival has become legendary – in fact, many of our supporters call us the "friendly festival". Our winners have gone on to become highly respected and influential, working around the world. Do apply, and experience for yourself this unique competition in the wonderful city of St Albans.'

Competitions secretary: competitions@organfestival.com

The Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec, firm of Orgues Létourneau began 2019 by dismantling a Louis Mitchell organ from 1872 at the parish church of St-Roch-de-Richelieu, Quebec. The instrument was then transported to the Létourneau shop for a complete restoration. Among other details, replicas of the missing 8ft Trompette and 4ft Clairon stops will be made and reinstated in their original positions on the Grand-Orgue windchest. And Michigan State University of East Lansing, Michigan, has signed an agreement with Orgues Létourneau for a new pipe organ. A two-manual instrument of 36 ranks, the specification reflects the many

▼ A new organ for Michigan

roles the organ will fill in the university's Alumni Chapel (right), for teaching, practice, recitals, and choral accompaniment; it will also enhance the approximately 160 weddings that take place in the chapel annually. Project completion is expected before May 2020.



COURTESY ORGUES LETOURNEAU

PAST LIVES

COURTESY WORCESTER NEWS



JAMES MACKENZIE (1939-2018)

The passing of the Scottish organ builder James MacKenzie (known to many friends and clients as 'Hamish') on 7 December 2018 brings closure to a career spanning over six decades, *writes Matthew Hynes*.

Born and raised in the Anderston district of central Glasgow, MacKenzie would readily attribute much of his conservationist sensibilities applied in later life to a significant number of Victorian and Edwardian organs in the locality which had

survived much as they had been built, with musical and mechanical aesthetics intact.

In 1955, he commenced an apprenticeship with the Glasgow firm of Andrew Watt & Son where, despite his premature disillusionment with the highly commercialised approach in the workshop, he realised nonetheless that there were excellent senior craftsmen from whom he could learn everything he needed eventually to follow his own path. The establishment of his own business in 1960 was an entirely natural progression and, beyond brief consideration given to an invitation to take over the management of Gray & Davison in 1963, he never looked back.

Beyond the daily disciplines of tuning and maintenance, restoration, and the relocation of redundant instruments, he was active as an adviser when called upon. In the case of two more recent and significant Glasgow projects – Kelvingrove Art Gallery (1901 Lewis & Co., restored Mander 1989) and Cottier's Theatre (1876 Willis, restored Harrison & Harrison 2014) – his insight and tenacity as a consultant were integral to a successful outcome.

Following retirement and sale of the business in 2015, and in the face of increasing infirmity, Jim remained ever willing to pass on knowledge and advice to those who approached him.

Among the most conspicuous legacies of Jim's working life in the west of Scotland is his rescuing of the historic 1865 Hill organ from his own childhood church in Anderston, subsequently installed by him in the city's St Bride's Scottish Episcopal Church in 1971. The restoration of this instrument, completed in spring 2018, was a project that he had hoped to see come to fruition in his lifetime.

Matthew Hynes worked with James MacKenzie from 1997-2015.

JEAN GUILLOU (1930-2019)

The French organist, composer, teacher and organ designer Jean Guillou died on 26 January.

Guillou studied at the Paris Conservatoire under Dupré, Duruflé and Messiaen. In 1963 he succeeded André Marchal as titular organist of Saint-Eustache, Paris, where he stayed until 2015. He collaborated with several builders on the design of new organs, most recently in San Antonio dei Portoghesi, Rome (2008, Mascioni), and in Leon Cathedral, Spain (2013, Klais).

Of special note among his compositions is *La Révolte des Orgues* op.69, for great organ, eight portative organs, and percussion; the work has been championed by artistic director Johannes Skudlik in several editions of the Euro-Via Festival, and was performed in 2018 at the Elbphilharmonie, Hamburg, and Westminster Cathedral, London. (Tribute in the next issue.)

NOEL RAWSTHORNE (1929-2019)

The British composer and organist Noel Rawsthorne died on 28 January. He was organist of Liverpool Cathedral for 25 years from 1955-80, thereafter becoming organist emeritus on being succeeded by his pupil and assistant, Ian Tracey. After study at the Royal Manchester College of Music (now the Royal Northern College of Music), Rawsthorne won scholarships to study with both Fernando Germani and Marcel Dupré. From 1980-84 he was city organist and artistic director at St George's Hall, Liverpool, and travelled widely as a recitalist in the UK, Europe and the USSR. In recognition of his many achievements, he was awarded a DMus from the University of Liverpool in 1994. A service of thanksgiving will be held at Liverpool Cathedral on Sunday 3 March at 3pm. (Tribute in the next issue.)

IN BRIEF

Independent label **Signum Records** has entered into a collaboration with the respected boutique London-based label **Cala Records**. Founded in 1990 by Australian conductor Geoffrey Simon and American lawyer Daniel Schiffman. Cala's back-catalogue of choral recordings includes Gregorian chant, the Jonathan Miller production of Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, Bliss's *Morning Heroes*, and anthologies of music by Geoffrey Hanson, Humphrey Clucas and John Tavener.

Following the discovery of 12 completely unknown organ compositions by opera composer **Giacomo Puccini** at the family home in Torre del Lago, Italy, Puccini expert Prof. Virgilio Bernardon of Bergamo has edited and published all 57 Puccini organ compositions known today in an edition by Carus-Verlag, which was presented recently at a symposium and concert in Reggio Emilia.



Reflecting the popularity in the UK of *urtext* editions and the enthusiasm in Germany for British choral music, **Oxford University Press** and **Carus-Verlag Stuttgart** have entered into a cooperative agreement to distribute each other's most popular choral and organ publications. A selection of Carus's modern editions of J.S. Bach, Mendelssohn, Handel, Mozart, and Brahms is now available via OUP, and Oxford choral works including music by John Rutter, Tallis, Vaughan Williams, and Bob Chilcott (pictured, centre, with Carus Verlag's Dr Johannes Graulich, left, and OUP's Alastair Henderson, right) are available via Carus-Verlag.

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PARRY ORATORIO REVIVAL

A NEGLECTED 19TH-CENTURY ORATORIO has been revived for its first London performance in over 100 years.

Judith was the first oratorio by C.H.H. Parry, whose centenary of death was marked in 2018. The work – which tells the story of an Old Testament widow who lures and then decapitates the leader of the Israelites' enemy – was premiered in Birmingham in August 1888 to instant acclaim. It contains the melody that later, under the name



▲ Judith Beheading Holofernes, by Caravaggio

'Repton', became indelibly associated with the hymn 'Dear Lord and Father of Mankind'.

After its initial success, the oratorio fell into neglect; it has not had a full UK performance for over 65 years and has never been recorded. On 3 April, William Vann will conduct the first London performance since 1889, with soloists Sarah Fox, Kathryn Rudge, Toby Spence and Henry Waddington, Crouch End Festival Chorus and the London Mozart Players. The same forces will record it later that month, for release on Chandos Records in 2020.

Parry specialist Jeremy Dibble, who has been involved in the project, talks of the work's 'impressive sonority and pathos' and 'rich, diatonic harmonic language'.

The project is a highly significant event in the modern revival of Parry's music, and neglected English masterpieces in general.

C.H.H. Parry's oratorio Judith will be performed at the Royal Festival Hall, London, on 3 April as part of the London English Song Festival. More information at bit.ly/2sRd0Nu

The London-based Vigala Singers are to return to Stockholm with their conductor, Joy Hill, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of their inaugural concert, at which the group performed Gabriel Jackson's *A ship with unfurled sails*. The choir has since premiered Jackson's *Christmas Eve* and *Nightingale Fragments*. Choir members are alumni of the Royal College of Music Junior Department Chamber Choir; the Estonian municipality of Vigala, birthplace of composer Veljo Tormis, was chosen as the name of the group, after it performed there at the Estonian Choral Directors' Seminar. During their Stockholm tour (4-7 Apr) they will work with Gary Graden, conductor of St Jacob's Chamber Choir and cantor at the city's Storkyrkan Cathedral. vigalasingers.org



EVENTS

RSCM Oxford is to hold a three-day **Easter Course for Young Choristers**, to include preparation for the RSCM's Bronze and Silver Awards. Sessions with Dr Jonathan White take place at Exeter and Lincoln Colleges, Oxford, on 8, 10 and 13 Apr, including Evensong in Christ Church Cathedral. Details: bit.ly/2WuCaui

The **33rd London Organ Day**, promoted by the Incorporated Association of Organists, will be held at Christ Church, Spitalfields (3 Mar). Recitals on the historic Richard Bridge organ by Ghislaine Reece-Trapp, Richard Brasier and Daniel Moulton are complemented by sessions including a newsround from the Society of Women Organists, and an interactive organ tour led by the two consultants responsible for the organ's restoration, William McVicker and Nicholas Thistlethwaite, with curator organist Gerard Brooks. Details and bookings: bit.ly/2sMW7mT

The **Choral Scholars of University College Dublin** will celebrate their 20th anniversary and the release of their new Signum recording, *Perpetual Twilight*, with a performance at Zankel Hall in New York City (15 Mar) of new choral music inspired by imagery of the natural world in traditional Irish and Scottish folksong and poetry. Tickets: bit.ly/2DANetp

The **John Armitage Memorial (JAM)** annual concert, 'Music of Our Time', will take place at St Bride's Church, Fleet Street, London, on 21 Mar. Michael Bawtree conducts the Chapel Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge, with Onyx Brass and Simon Hogan (organ). The concert features the premieres of works submitted in JAM's annual Call for Music, by Phillip Cooke, Stephen Nunes, David Nunn, Richard Peat, Helen Roe and Frederick Viner, with reprises for JAM commissioned works by Rory Boyle and Paul Patterson. bit.ly/2MAi5me

EVENTS

The Royal College of Organists has announced the following events and courses for Spring 2019. **Hymns and Voluntaries** – practical guidance, with Ian Curror and Bramwell Bourne (9 Mar, Plymouth: Emmanuel Church, Mannamead); **Preparing for CRCO, ARCO and FRCO**, with John Scott Whiteley, Tom Bell and Robin Harrison (16 Mar, Huddersfield: St Paul's Hall); **TOSE-in-a-Day** – Repertoire, keyboard skills, choral conducting and accompanying tuition for teenage organists of around Grade 5 standard and above with tutors Daniel Moulton, Jeremiah Stephenson and Simon Williams (London venues, 23 Mar); **Equipping the Organist**, with James Lloyd Thomas (30 Mar, Stourbridge: St Thomas, Market Street); **Carlisle Local Organ Workshop**, with Andrew Cantrill-Fenwick, Andrew Macintosh and Tom Bell (30 Mar, Carlisle Cathedral, St Cuthbert and St Aidan); **Easter Course**, with Daniel Moulton, Stephen Farr, Susan Landale, Sarah MacDonald and Simon Williams (4-6 Apr, Cambridge: Sidney Sussex and other colleges); and **Best Foot Forward**, with Kevin Bowyer (24 Apr, Glasgow University Memorial Chapel). Details: bit.ly/2DCXsmG

The **Saint Cecilia Singers**, formed in 1949 by the 19-year old Donald Hunt, then assistant to the director of music, Herbert Sumson, at Gloucester Cathedral, is celebrating 70 years with Evensong (former choir members are invited to participate), a birthday tea and free concert in the Cathedral (2 Mar), to include Duruflé's Requiem and pieces performed at the Singers' inaugural concerts in 1949 and 1950. Email Bairbre Lloyd: mail@bairbre.co.uk

The **Sibelius Academy's** first Organ Academy will take place from 1-7 Aug 2019, using a variety of organs in Helsinki and Janakka. bit.ly/2DKalFO

GOING DUTCH

AMONG THE ATTRACTIONS OF ORGELFESTIVAL HOLLAND (Alkmaar, 21-28 June) are the events surrounding the International Schnitger Organ Competition. After Pieter van Dijk's 'Cheesemarket' concert in the Grote Kerk (21 Jun), the Festival's opening concert (21 Jun, Grote Kerk) will be given by St Salvator's Chapel Choir from St Andrews, performing music by Bernard Foccroulle, Johannes Ockeghem, Orlando di Lasso, Heinrich Scheidemann, Michael Praetorius, Bach and Buxtehude, conducted by Claire Innes-Hopkins, with organist Bernard Foccroulle.

Other highlights of the programme include a symposium on Franz Caspar Schnitger, builder of the Grote Kerk's Van Hagerbeer/Schnitger organ, around which the Festival revolves (23 Jun). In the 400th year since the death of Franz Caspar's father Arp Schnitger, Martin Böcker, Pieter van Dijk, Gerben Gritter, Cees van der Poel, Krzysztof Urbaniak and Frank van Wijk will consider who was 'The Better Schnitger'. Pieter van Dijk and Frank van Wijk will give a duet recital of orchestral music by J.S. Bach, Beethoven and Brahms at the Grote Kerk (24 Jun), and Bas de Vroome will make a case for the organ works of Hugo Distler (1908-42) in a lunchtime recital (27 Jun).

The **15th International Organ Academy Alkmaar** runs contiguously with the Festival. The event consists of workshops, masterclasses, concerts and excursions. The academy is open to organ students, professional organists and advanced amateurs, as well as observers. Participants work with international specialists on a repertoire specifically attuned to the characteristics of the teaching organs. Lessons are held in the Grote Sint Laurenskerk on both its world-famous organs – the Van Hagerbeer/Schnitger organ (1646/1725) and the Van Covelens organ (1511), and on the wonderful Müller organs of the Kapelkerk (1762) and the Lutheran Church (1755), all in Alkmaar. The jury members of the International Schnitger Organ Competition 2019 will teach at the Academy. bit.ly/2TgnDVp1



▲ The Van Hagerbeer/Schnitger organ of the Grote Kerk, Alkmaar



The Phoenix Collective, a newly-formed group of Kodály-trained musicians, is to offer courses ranging from Kodály Pedagogy for different age groups to Baroque Dance, Dalcroze Eurhythmics and A Cappella Arranging. Kodály musicianship will form part of all courses. The inaugural weekend course, 'The Holistic Voice', covering Alexander Technique, Vocal Technique, Kodály Musicianship and Gospel Singing, will be held at Royal Russell School, Croydon, South London (30-31 Mar). Allan Hubert-Wright will show how to create different sounds with the voice for different styles of singing – here, the 'classical sound' and the 'gospel sound'. Based in France, Hubert-Wright uses funding from the French government to work with singers in all genres – many, but not all, with damaged voices. Conductor and broadcaster Ken Burton will lead sessions on gospel singing and will conduct his own London Adventist Chorale in a concert performance on 30 March. In the Alexander Technique sessions, Kathy Hulme will show how even small physical adjustments can make a great difference to the range and quality of vocal sounds produced. Cyrilla Rowsell (pictured) and others will lead Kodály musicianship sessions, catering for all levels of experience. 'Kodály is a wonderful way to learn musical skills, knowledge and understanding through singing,' she told C&O. thephoenixcollective.co.uk

GRAND PASSIONS

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▲ The young professional ensemble Sansara will perform in the Holy Week Festival at St John's Smith Square

MERTON COLLEGE, OXFORD WILL HOST its 10th **Passiontide at Merton** festival (12-14 Apr). Highlights include the Riga Vocal Quartet performing Gabriel Jackson's *Exile Meditations*; Tallis's *Spem in alium* and Scarlatti's *Stabat Mater* with Andrew Carwood and The Cardinal's Musick; Merton College Girl Choristers singing Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*; a 60th birthday tribute to James MacMillan; Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with Elin Manahan Thomas and Mark Wilde; and the CD launch of Gabriel Jackson's *The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

Prominent among the visiting artists are the Riga Vocal Quartet. Founded in 2017 by American conductor and singer Christopher Walsh Sinka, the group comprises current and former members of the State Choir Latvija and the Latvian Radio Choir. Specialising in new music, the ensemble premiered Gabriel Jackson's *Exile Meditations* in July 2017 to great acclaim. Details: bit.ly/2CK11rU.

► Returning for a third successive year, St John's Smith Square, London's **Holy Week Festival** will run from Palm Sunday (14 Apr) to Holy Saturday (20 Apr).

Curated in partnership with Tenebrae and Nigel Short, the venue will host workshops, ticketed concerts and free late-night liturgical events exploring a vast range of sacred music in celebration of Holy Week.

Nigel Short and Tenebrae will perform a sequence of devotional settings and

responses on Spy Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. The festival will also include opportunities to participate in workshops.

The 2019 festival will also mark Sir James MacMillan's 60th birthday year by celebrating his extraordinarily beautiful and evocative music. MacMillan's groundbreaking *Seven Last Words from the Cross* will be performed by Tenebrae and the Britten Sinfonia, and the composer will conduct a concert of his a cappella works with the BBC Singers – alongside Gesualdo's Responsories for Maundy Thursday, Sir James will conduct movements from his *Strathclyde Motets* and *A Choral Sequence from the St John Passion*.

Sir James told *C&O*: 'With the growing interest in, and popularity of sacred music, this is an event which is making a timely appearance, especially at a liturgically charged time of year. It appeals to the religious and non-religious alike, in that its cherished repertoire is central to our great classical musical culture, which is now a universal language and heritage.'

Other headline performers in this year's festival include the Brodsky Quartet, Ex Cathedra, The Marian Consort, Polyphony and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and The Tallis Scholars. Alongside this are leading amateur (Etcetera Choir), collegiate (Choir of Clare College, Cambridge) and young professional ensembles (Sansara and Siglo de Oro). Details: bit.ly/2CKYATr

EVENTS

Spring concerts at **St Peter's, Eaton Square**, London, will feature the Holst Singers, directed by Stephen Layton, in 'Reformation and Revolution', a programme contrasting English music from the 16th century with contemporary Baltic repertoire (21 Mar). Andrew Griffiths conducts Londinium in 'Masses of Masses' – settings by Richard Rodney Bennett, Rheinberger, William Albright and Vaughan Williams (4 April). Tickets: bit.ly/2S97LGR

During the restoration of its Father Willis organ, **Salisbury Cathedral's** organ recital programme is being replaced by a series of chamber concerts. In 'Lifting the Lid', David Owen Norris will perform and talk about his life and music, followed by an auction of promises in aid of the Organ Fund. Alexander Palotai will perform music from William Byrd's *My Ladye Nevells Booke* on the Cathedral's chamber organ. During Lent, the organists will perform preludes and fugues from Bach's '48' on the Cathedral's Blüthner piano in lieu of organ voluntaries. bit.ly/2DCA2O4

Stephen Hamilton, Minister of Music Emeritus at the Church of the Holy Trinity (Episcopal), New York City is undertaking a European tour in March and April. Beginning with a mixed programme at St Matthäus Lutheran Church in Munich (22 Mar), he will perform Dupré's *Le chemin de la croix* at Saint Paul within the Walls, Rome (31 Mar), St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh (7 Apr), St Salvator's Chapel, St Andrews (9 Apr, with masterclass), and Glasgow Cathedral (16 Apr).

The Sixteen's founder-conductor **Harry Christophers** is in conversation with Sara Mohr-Pietsch to produce a book looking back over the ensemble's 40-year history. *A New Heaven: Harry Christophers and The Sixteen, Choral Conversations with Sara Mohr-Pietsch* will be published by Faber & Faber in Aug.

NEWS & PREVIEWS

PREMIERES [RP = REGIONAL PREMIERE]

David Loxley-Blount: Harlequin Voluntaries for Peter Preleur
Gerard Brooks (org)
2 Mar, Christ Church Spitalfields, London, UK

Paul Ayres: The spacious firmament
Choir of First Congregational Church of Lebanon
3 Mar, 10 South Park Street, Lebanon, NH, US

Gareth Wilson: Magnificat Secundi Toni/ Gorton Fauxbourdons
Chapel Choir of Gorton College/Wilson
3 March, Gorton College Chapel, Cambridge, UK

Ian Sturges Milliken: Whispers of Heavenly Death
Dessoff Choirs/Merriweather (dir)
9 Mar, Union Theological Seminary, 3041 Broadway, New York, NY, US

Pēteris Vasks: Mutter Teresa/The Fruit of Silence [RP]
Xi'an Symphony Orchestra and Choir/Chan
13 Mar, Xi'an Concert Hall, Xi'an, CN

Eriks Ešenvalds: Where is Heaven?
Methodist College Chapel Choir, Belfast/McCartney
14 Mar, Waterfront Hall, Belfast, UK

Roxanna Panufnik: Across the Line of Dreams
Univ. of Maryland Choir, Baltimore SO/Alsop
14 Mar, The Music Center at Strathmore, North Bethesda, MD, US
15, 16 Mar, Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall, Baltimore, MD, US

Jessica Curry: Briefly it enters, and briefly speaks
London Oriana Choir, RAM Percussion Collective/Peckham
16 Mar, St Clement Danes, Strand, London, UK

Francis Pott: At First Light
Commotio, Joseph Spooner (vc)/Berry
16 Mar, SJE Arts, Oxford, UK

Philip Cooke: For He Is Our Peace [RP]; **Stephen Nunes: Isabeau's y promene; Richard Peat: Sanctorum Cantuarienses; David Nunn: Sitvit anima mea; Helen Roe: Vidi Aquam; Frederick Viner: Justorum Animae**
Andrew Watts (c-t), Chapel Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge, Onyx Brass, Simon Hogan (org)/Bawtree
21 Mar, St Bride's, Fleet Street, London, UK

Eriks Ešenvalds: Adoremus in Aeternum
Female Choir of Saga Senior High School/Higuchi
21 Mar, Saga Senior High Sch., Saga City, Kyushu, JP

Jonathan Dove: Sappho Sings
Fairhaven Singers, East Anglia CO/Woodward
23 Mar, The Apex, Bury St Edmunds, UK
30 Mar, Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge, UK

Barnaby Martin: Mass for three voices
Vicars Choral of Wells Cathedral/Owens
24 Mar, Wells Cathedral, UK

Judith Weir: Day by Day
Pupils of Burntwood School/Lammin
25 Mar, Royal Festival Hall, London, UK

Cecilia McDowall: Shadow-maker
Oxfordshire primary schools, Radley College Choirs, The King's Singers/Gladstone
27 Mar, Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford, UK

Salim Hadid: Concert Étude 'Ocean Tempest'
D'Arcy Trinkwon (org)
27 Mar, Univ. of Sussex, Brighton, UK

Ian Lawson: One World
Llandaff Cathedral Choral Society/Thacker
30 Mar, Llandaff Cathedral, Cardiff, UK

Michael Berkeley: Magdalena
Addison Singers/Wordsworth
30 Mar, St Peter's, Acton Green, London, UK

Maja S.K. Ratkje: Sirkling
Norwegian Girls' Choir/Sundal-Ask
31 Mar, Oslo Int. Church Music Festival, NO

Gavin Bryars: Mistral
Chamber Choir Les Éléments, Ensemble Percussions Claviers de Lyon/Suhubiette
1 Apr, Odyssud Blagnac, Toulouse, FR

Gareth Wilson: Drop, drop slow tears
Aurora Nova/Craig
7 Apr, St Paul's Cathedral, London, UK

Joby Talbot: A Sheen of Dew on Flowers
Britten Sinfonia Voices, Britten Sinfonia/Dougan
11 Apr, Barbican Hall, London, UK

Gabriel Jackson: Exile Meditations [RP]
Riga Vocal Quartet/Sinka
12 Apr, Merton College Chapel, Oxford, UK

Bob Chilcott: When Spring comes walking
Heinz Chapel Choir/Rice
14 Apr, Heinz Chapel, Univ. of Pittsburgh, US

Dobrinka Tabakova: Alma Redemptoris Mater; Troparion of St John Rila
Saint Louis Chamber Chorus/Barnes
14 Apr, St Stanislaus Kostka Church, Saint Louis, MO, US

Jessica Curry: She Who
National Youth Choir of Great Britain/Parry
15 Apr, Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham, UK

James MacMillan: A Choral Sequence from the St John Passion [RP]
BBC Singers/MacMillan
18 Apr, St John's Smith Square, London, UK

Gareth Wilson: Logos Lxxii/Tristis est anima mea
Choir of Christ Church, Chelsea
18 April, Christ Church, Chelsea, London, UK

Anselm MacDonald: Asphyxiate
St Salvator's Chapel Choir/Innes-Hopkins
21 Apr, St Salvator's Chapel, St Andrews, UK

Jonathan Rutherford: For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth
Adrian Nicholson (org), Orford Church Choir/Kay
21 Apr, St Bartholomew's Church, Orford, Suffolk, UK

Eriks Ešenvalds: New work
Choral Scholars of University College Dublin/Earley
25 Apr, National Concert Hall, Dublin, IE

James McCarthy: One Giant Leap
Hertfordshire Chorus, Eagle House School Choir, Coldfall School Choir, London Orchestra da Camera/Temple
28 Apr, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southbank Centre, London, UK

Cecilia McDowall: Rise heart, thy Lord is Risen
Plymouth Congregational Church Choir/Brunelle
28 Apr, Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis, MN, US

Sasha Johnson Manning: An Easter Duet
Brent Johnson (org), Lansin Lim Kimler (pno)
28 Apr, Third Baptist Church, Saint Louis, MO, US



As part of a concert of lunar-themed works at London's Southbank Centre on 28 April, Hertfordshire Chorus will give the world premiere of British composer James McCarthy's *One Giant Leap*. The work celebrates the 50th anniversary of the successful Apollo 11 venture which landed Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin on the Moon. 'It focuses on both the technicalities of the mission and humankind's long history of wondering about the Moon, praising the Moon as a God and finding consolation in its presence,' McCarthy told C&O. 'It also imagines the Earth and the Moon as lovers eternally held in each other's orbit, but never quite able to make contact with each other.' The text includes quotes from President John F. Kennedy, Apollo 11 Commander Neil Armstrong, and poetry by Sara Teasdale, Shakespeare, John Gillespie Magee Jr (a pilot who was killed in an air crash at the age of 19 in 1941), and Sappho. 'We get a sense of danger in the Moon's closeness in a line from Shakespeare's *Othello*: "She comes more nearer earth than she was wont. And makes men mad."' bit.ly/2HBAjos

Please send items for News and Letters to the Editor for publication in the May/June 2019 issue to arrive by Friday 15 March: choirandorgan@rhinegold.co.uk; The Editor, Choir & Organ, 20 Rugby Street, London WC1N 3QZ

LETTERS

Hands-on experience

I read your report of the translation of the Turner Sims Concert Hall's Collins organ to Orford Church (C&O Jan/Feb 2019) with great interest, as I was a music student at Southampton University when the organ was new.

At my initial interview for a place on the music degree course, head of department Professor Peter Evans, himself an FRCO, described with much enthusiasm the new organ to arrive a year or so later. Piet Kee performed the opening recital on 8 October 1977.

I had been used to a much-rebuilt William Hill instrument in my home parish in Hertfordshire; this experience, followed by a year of lessons in Southampton on the decidedly dangerous (at least to an impressionable undergraduate) Henry Willis III at St Mary's Church (complete with 32ft Tuba), left me totally unprepared for the delights

of the new Collins.

As students, we were now able to play Bach, Buxtehude, etc. on an instrument with an appropriate action and with appropriate sounds. In retrospect, criticisms could be made and at times recently, commentators have not been kind about some of the instruments built during the 1970s; but to us then, the Collins was a revelation. I practised on it as much as I was able, performed my degree recital on it (Clérambault and Grigny, which really should not have worked) and above all lapped up all it offered sonically and mechanically.

I remember especially the transparent Great chorus complete with 16ft if desired, the balancing Oberwerk and a Pedal organ that did not need coupling in most cases. Bach's 'Dorian' Toccata & Fugue sounded stunning, underpinned by the 16ft Pedal reed. Flutes and mutations galore could be used to colour melodic lines in chorale preludes and the relaxed manual

chorus reeds were useful in solo and ensemble contexts. The Oberwerk 8ft reed I remember as being an inoffensive and useful oboe-like stop that combined well with the flutes and mutations; and there was also a Gamba with a decidedly authentic 'scrape' to it. In appropriate vocal repertoire the little Brustwerk worked admirably in a continuo context; its Regal-like reed was ideal for Monteverdi. Mendelssohn, Hindemith and contemporary composers fared well with the organ's transparent and characterful sounds.

The organ and hall remain very much part of Peter Evans's legacy, and countless students remember him and his work with boundless respect and affection. I am glad that the organ has gone to Orford. I believe Peter knew of the possibility of this relocation before he died, and that he approved.

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- The path traced by Cavaillé-Coll in the 19th Century, including the differences between the organs of Notre-Dame and Saint-Sulpice
- An interview with author Daniel Roth

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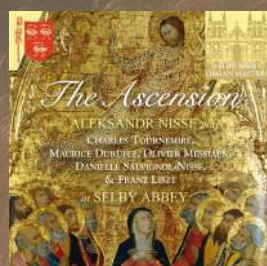


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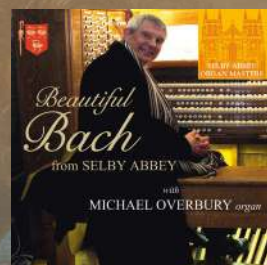
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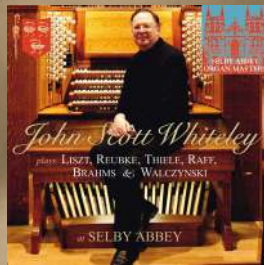
Aleksandr Nisse at Selby Abbey
Tournemire, Durufle, Messiaen, Salvignol-Nisse & Liszt played on the Hill organ at Selby Abbey



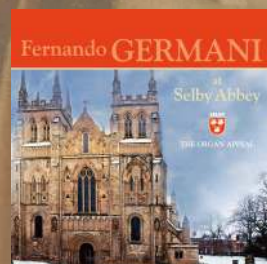
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John Joubert

1927 – 2019

Much has been said about John Joubert's arrival in Britain on a PRS Scholarship from the Union of South Africa in 1946, by no means the first or last distinguished composer from that country to enliven the music scene in Britain. Familiar, too, is the importance of his academic career, first at the University of Hull, from 1950, and subsequently Birmingham, between 1962 and 1986, then a visiting professorship thereafter at the University of Otago, New Zealand. This was not additional to his career as composer but the direct result of it. Though not referred to then as composer-in-residence, his Birmingham appointment was thus strategic in an otherwise research- and performance-based academic programme under the then professor, Anthony Lewis. Fortunately, a light teaching load afforded Joubert the space to create the large-scale pieces typical of his output at that time, including his memorable second symphony and arguably his finest opera, a dramatisation of Conrad's novel *Under Western Eyes*. A long and creative life, with music in the family (both his daughter, Anna, and his son, Pierre, are musicians), free of turmoil, settled in Moseley, allowed him, an instinctive artist, to craft an immediately recognisable signature. To his enormous credit, by the latter part of his career, the fluency of the arrival of new compositions remained constant and of consistent quality.

If his life story is well-documented and a fine body of, by my estimate, recordings of over 100 works exist now, including operas, symphonies and concertos, less has been written or appreciated about his musical language, particularly of the restless and exploratory symphonic pieces and eight works for the stage, rather than his many much-loved anthems, motets and music for the liturgy. *Under Western Eyes* may have been his most ambitious



▲ 'Undimming lyricism, elegance and urbanity': John Joubert

undertaking and his bid for the big-time contemporary topic but it was perhaps unfairly overlooked, being premiered, as it was, within months of the opening of Richard Rodney Bennett's setting of Conrad's *Victory* at the Royal Opera House. Perhaps, too, because in the era of outrage over apartheid, his stance on his homeland, though condemnatory, was nuanced rather than strident, his was never considered a useful partisan voice in the debate. Nor, for whatever reason, and whatever his popularity with choirs and performers, was Joubert accorded the honour of a performance at the Proms.

In the context of his generation of composers active in Britain, perhaps the most remarkable thing about Joubert was that he continued writing and receiving commissions into his nineties. This was undoubtedly partly the result of having established himself as an important figure in the musical life of the Midlands, with repeat performances at Presteigne and Three Choirs festivals. Longevity helped,

too: as he remarked at the time, turning 80 was a highly productive career move. But an undimming lyricism, elegance and urbanity were better guarantee of popularity with those in the know.

The range of his interests in the arts, both of our time and the classics, that set him apart from many of his creative contemporaries should be acknowledged. The choice of his operatic subjects alone ranged from major figures of 19th-century literature (Eliot, Tolstoy, Charlotte Brontë) to Sophocles or themes of his country of birth.

A few months ago, Joubert made a setting, not yet published, of Christina Rossetti's *Remember*, scored for soprano, recorder and string quartet, performed at the William Alwyn Festival in Blythburgh last October. Rossetti's words are suitably elegiac and valedictory for a work which, with prescience, Joubert felt would be his last. It shows no diminution of his compositional powers. ■

Howard Friend



In full bloom

The gardens designed by William Christie for his home in France have become a centre for baroque music, and a base for the specialist ensemble he founded 40 years ago. **Rebecca Tavenor** maps the fortunes of Les Arts Florissants

Gardening is an art, so it is no surprise that many creators and performers have an almost spiritual relationship with horticulture, particularly powerful among exiles and ex-pats: think of Frederick and Jelka Delius in Grez-sur-Loing, William and Susana Walton in Ischia, Ian Fleming at Goldeneye, David Hockney in the Hollywood Hills and, perhaps, of André Heller by Lake Garda and Gracie Fields at La Canzone del Mare on Capri. William Christie is a great example, with the elaborate gardens he designed for his house in Thiré, which have been recognised by the French government as a *monument historique* in 2006. Christie's twin passions of music and gardening have inspired an entire creative industry, born out of the foundation by him 40 years ago of Les Arts Florissants.

works, it is with fully-staged baroque opera productions that they have enjoyed their most notable successes. Composers in whom they have specialised include not only Rameau, Lully, Charpentier, Handel, Purcell, Monteverdi and even Mozart, but also lesser-known figures such as Landi, Cesti and Campa. Their current residence in the Philharmonie de Paris provides a home-base for concerts. As Laurent Bayle, *directeur général* of the Cité de la Musique, puts it: 'An historical approach doesn't mean a closed mind or a withdrawal into the past; on the contrary, it's a laboratory of great artistic vitality. The Philharmonie de Paris is very proud to be accompanied by Les Arts Florissants.'

It is hardly surprising that the publishing of new editions of French baroque works flows from this

◀ Les Arts Florissants rehearse in the gardens designed by their founder and artistic director William Christie for his house in Thiré, France

'An historical approach doesn't mean a closed mind or withdrawal into the past; on the contrary, it's a laboratory of great artistic vitality' – Laurent Bayle

Christie, born in the US, was a student of harpsichordist Ralph Kirkpatrick. His opposition to the Vietnam war and determination not to become a combatant led to his relocation to France in 1970. Considered in horticultural terms, a more successful transplantation seems unimaginable and, as a French citizen since 1995, it is certainly no longer apt to classify him as an exile. He founded Les Arts Florissants (LAF) in 1979: one of many organisations that first bloomed in the rich soil of the so-called 'early music movement' as it began to provoke an earthquake in musical thought, research and performance practice. Many such performing ventures withered on the vine, but LAF proved hardier, exemplifying the finest in baroque revival and rediscovery, and the company has grown into something of an institution.

Although they are famous for concert performances of both sacred and secular

activity: the 'Les Arts Florissants' collection from Les Éditions des Abbesses was launched in 2004 and now comprises nine titles: five short operas by Marc-Antoine Charpentier, one opera by Lully, and three motets by Jean-Joseph Cassanéa de Mondonville, beginning a French Religious Music series.

As for recordings, a discography of near 100 documents a history of ongoing excellence. A clutch of reissues in 2018 is, hopefully, a foretaste of more to appear this 40th anniversary year. One of those 2018 reissues is *Le Jardin de Monsieur Rameau*, 'a wander through the heart of French vocal art from the Enlightenment' featuring singers from their own academy, Le Jardin des Voix. Young Scottish soprano Rachel Redmond, now resident in Paris thanks to the volume of work flowing from her engagement with this programme, is featured on their latest

▷

PHILIP REDELVAI



TADZIO





OSCAR ORTEGA

◀ CD *Les Maîtres du Motet* (see review, p.87). How did it all begin? 'I met William Christie in 2009, in the Glyndebourne production of Purcell's *Fairy Queen*. I was in the choir and had a small role so we had already worked together when I auditioned. I was part of the 2011 edition of *Jardin des Voix*. Now a regular singer with the Company, she confesses to having 'a soft spot for working with LAF. They have a lovely mix of long-standing regulars and new talent – it's always a joy to catch up with old friends.' Christie says of the scheme: 'What I find wonderful is what we have achieved on a human level. Apart from the musical qualities we wish to develop in our laureates, with each new edition we have formed a team of which we can be justly proud, founded in the spirit of teamwork, which is the hallmark of LAF.' That wish to nurture the voices of the future extends to youth initiatives such as the Arts Flo Juniors programme for conservatoire students, established in 2007 along with a partnership with New York's Juilliard School of Music. The audition form on the LAF

website, easily accessible, means that there's no excuse for aspiring singers not to go for it.

Launched in 2012, the festival 'Dans les Jardins de William Christie: musical encounters in the Vendée' is designed to create an event that unites music and gardens, making Christie's creation at Thiré known to a wider public. If that were not enough, Les Arts Florissants launched a new event in 2017: the Festival du Printemps, under the artistic direction of renowned Scottish tenor Paul Agnew, whose long association with LAF has developed into the role of Christie's right hand man.

What's it like to work for each director? Rachel Redmond says: 'They are quite alike in what they find important; they both demand very clear text, and an attention to phrasing, ornamentation and also clarity of voice. As for differences, maybe Bill places more importance on acting; he wants singers to be demonstrative, emotionally communicative, really actors, even in a concert setting. Paul often focuses on blending of voices ▶

▲ William Christie 'wants singers to be demonstrative, emotionally communicative, actors even in a concert setting'

◀ (from top) William Christie directs a performance of Rameau's *Le Maître à Danser*, recording their latest CD, *Les Maîtres du Motet*, under the baton of Paul Agnew, who has a long association with Les Arts Florissants

LES ARTS FLORISSANTS

JULIEN GAZEAU



JULIEN GAZEAU



JULIEN GAZEAU



JULIEN GAZEAU



JULIEN GAZEAU



JULIEN GAZEAU





and, being a singer, Paul gets quite in-depth about how exactly he'd like things sung.'

With around 100 concerts a year, all that education and development work, festivals, publications, house and garden restoration work etc, money needs to flow. The French government has been generous: currently Les Arts Florissants receives financial support from the Ministry of Culture and Communication, the Département de la Vendée and the Région Pays de la Loire. The Selz Foundation, American Friends of Les Arts Florissants and Crédit Agricole Corporate & Investment Bank are principal sponsors.

Christie has had honours heaped upon him, including the Grand Croix of the Légion d'honneur in 2014, and he is an Officier in the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. He was elected a member of the French Académie des Beaux-Arts in 2008, and he also received the Georges Pompidou Prize (2005) as well as the Liliane Bettencourt Choral Singing Prize, awarded by the Académie des Beaux-Arts in 2004.

The wise gardener works for posterity and, with Paul Agnew doing much directing since 2007, succession planning is assured. Meanwhile, as with every garden, things are still emerging and evolving: the Les Arts Florissants Centre Culturel de Rencontre at Thiré is dedicated to the 'baroque spirit' and includes The Artists' Quarter, still undergoing development, which serves as a base for their festivals and the Academy of the Jardin des Voix. Residencies for gardeners and heritage specialists are developed throughout the year.

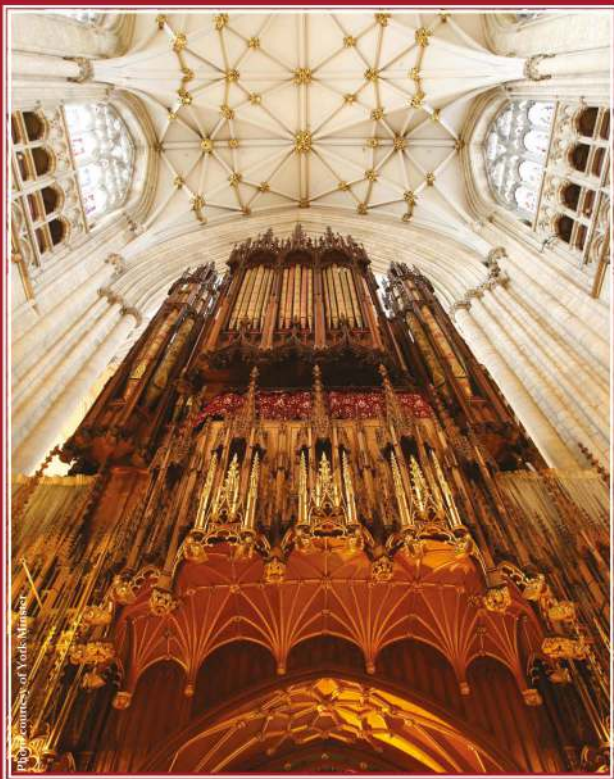
Everyone knows how Voltaire ends his play *Candide*: 'Neither need you tell me,' said Candide, 'that we must take care of our garden.' Writing from a home he created in exile, Voltaire wrote to his agent asking for 'artichoke bulbs and as much as possible of lavender, thyme, rosemary, mint, basil, rue, strawberry bushes, pinks, thadicee, balm, tarragon, sariette, burnet, sage and hyssop to cleanse our sins, etc.' to design his own garden. Christie's is not an involuntary exile like Voltaire's, but he shares his understanding of the synergy of gardens and art, his philosophy of peace and labour, as well as Enlightenment principles which question, inform, reason, collaborate, nurture and cultivate – his musical garden Les Arts Florissants appears ready to flourish for another 40 years. ■

Rebecca Tavener is a singer and director specialising in early and contemporary music. She is founder-director of Canty, Scotland's only professional medieval music group.

◀ The gardens at Thiré host the Les Arts Florissants Centre Culturel de Rencontre, dedicated to the 'baroque spirit', a base for the Academy of the Jardin des Voix and the festival 'Dans les Jardins de William Christie: musical encounters in the Vendée'

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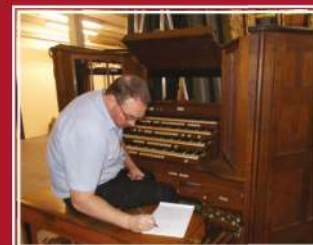


Photo by Charlotte Graham



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STAY IN THE KNOW



Coming of age

Pierre Dubois is impressed by how Michel Jurine has blended romantic French organ building techniques with a spirit of modernism in his new instrument for St-Didier-au-Mont-d'Or. PHOTOS BY PIERRE DUBOIS



During the 19th century, organ building thrived in France. Large firms with considerable workforces – among them Cavaillé-Coll, Merklin, and Ducroquet – flourished, building hundreds of large and small church instruments both in France and abroad. Matters later took a downward turn, however, especially after the separation between Church and State in 1905. The general decline in church attendance in the course of the 20th century no doubt had a strong impact on organ building, and difficulties were encountered. Although there are still 68 active organ building firms in France today, most of them are rather small in size – employing between five and ten workers on average (the largest, Mülheisen, employs about 14 workers, and Pascal Quoirin a dozen). This is a far cry from the size of the largest organ building companies elsewhere in Europe (Nicholson & Co., Harrison & Harrison, Klais Orgelbau, Rieger, Ruffati, Van den Heuvel, and so on), which employ scores of workers. Strangely, while French organ builders manage to win contracts for important projects abroad – such as the new organ to be built by Mülheisen, G. Walther & Associates for the new Philharmonic Hall in Moscow (82 stops) – commissions for large new organs in France often go to foreign companies, as illustrated by the recent installations in the Philharmonie and the Maison de la Radio in Paris, which went to Rieger Orgelbau and Gerhard Grenzing respectively. Between the sea-change in the size of the workshops, the growing interest in early music and baroque organs over the

◀ 'Original, well thought through and crafted': Michel Jurine's new organ near Lyon ▶



▲ The design of the case contrasts sharply with the neo-Gothic style of the church

◁ last 40 years or so, and the development of modern techniques for winding systems, transmissions and console management, construction methods applied by such great 19th-century organ builders as Cavaillé-Coll and Merklin have tended to be neglected, and few builders in France

Saint-Sulpice, Saint-Roch and Saint-Laurent in Paris, Perpignan Cathedral, and Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Paul in Épernay, among others. He now has his own company, based in Rontalon outside Lyon, and heads a small team of eight. A well-trained organist (he studied under Pierre Perdigon and Louis

firm in three main points: he aims to build modern organs in the French aesthetic tradition of the 19th and 20th centuries, strongly influenced by the instruments of Cavaillé-Coll and Merklin; he allows for modern-looking cases which are at one with contemporary standards of taste; and he wants to keep complete control over the whole process from conception to manufacture of the instrument. As the firm's website illustrates, everything (apart from the solid-state memory system by Eltec) is designed and built in-house: metal and wooden pipes, wind-chests, bellows and wind supply, keys, stop-action systems, console and case. Finally, the organs are of course voiced by Michel Jurine himself.

Long renowned for his skill in restoration and the maintenance of historic organs, Jurine at first found it difficult to establish himself as a builder of brand-new instruments, but this is beginning to change. He has now completed 11 new organs, including two for South Korea, and his order book is currently full, including a project for the new church of Mokpo in the

No 'style' can be reduced to a mere stoplist – everything contributes to the general effect

today resort to their methods as a matter of course. Sadly, it is almost as though part of the French organ building heritage had fallen fallow, and a tradition had been lost.

However, there is at least one organ builder who, after long periods of study and experience restoring historic organs by Cavaillé-Coll and Merklin, is determined to put his vast knowledge of their techniques and voicing practices to good use in his own instruments – Michel Jurine. As head voicer of the now-defunct firm of Renaud in Nantes from 1991 to 1997, he took part in the restoration of prestigious organs such as

Robilliard in the Lyon Conservatoire), he also studied musicology at the Sorbonne and wrote his thesis on Joseph Merklin (*Joseph Merklin, facteur d'orgues européen – Essai sur l'orgue français au XIXe siècle*, Paris: Klincksieck, 1990, 3 vols). He also published a remarkable study on the Barker lever in the *ISO Yearbook* in 1995 ('Essai sur l'appareil pneumatique intermédiaire – Les machines Barker dans l'orgue français du XIXe siècle'). His approach is therefore at the same time technical, musical, historical and aesthetic.

Jurine sums up the philosophy of his

same country. Of particular interest is the organ (his Opus 6) completed about two years ago for the parish church of St-Didier-au-Mont-d'Or, a small but prosperous town of about 6,000 inhabitants on the northern outskirts of Lyon. As the organ was commissioned directly by the town council, the organ builder did not have to accept recommendations from any organ adviser, and was free to make his own proposals. The result is original, extremely well thought through and crafted, and is musically very convincing.

While not a copy of any existing Cavaillé-Coll organ, this new instrument is based on the major precepts defined by the great 19th-century organ builder. No 'style' can indeed be reduced to a mere stoplist. Everything contributes equally to the general effect, from the winding system, the action, the size of the chests and valves, the connection between bellows and wind-chests, to the various parameters of the pipework that determine its progression. For instance, Jurine argues that the double-rise bellows (with different pressures for each section) and the wind-chests should work as 'couples', and not be placed too far away from each other. Further, following Cavaillé-Coll's system, Jurine has opted for pipes with tuning slots (as opposed to pipes cut to length), a device introduced by Merklin at St-Eugène, Paris, in 1855, and then systematically adopted by Cavaillé-Coll from the construction of the organ at Ste-Clotilde, Paris, in 1859, which was a turning point in his production. Tuning slots have great bearing upon tone colour. When working for Renaud, Jurine had painstakingly noted down hundreds of measurements in the organs he was working on, and this accumulated knowledge proves invaluable in the production of appropriate organ sonority.

The St-Didier organ has an original disposition. The Grand-Orgue and Récit Expressif both have simple tracker action, and there is also a permanent coupling manual, the action of which is transmitted via a Barker pneumatic lever. There are several advantages to this system: the brisk, precise action of the Grand-Orgue and Récit enable excellent articulation and ornamentation; when coupling is needed and many stops are drawn together, the

Barker lever on the coupling manual alleviates the weight and facilitates the touch; and the coupling manual can be used as a solo division against either the Grand-Orgue or the Récit, all the more so as the Tirasses (pedal couplers) from Grand-Orgue and Récit are independent, so that volume can be controlled carefully. Surprisingly, passing directly from the manuals with tracker action to the

coupling manual using Barker assistance is never disconcerting.

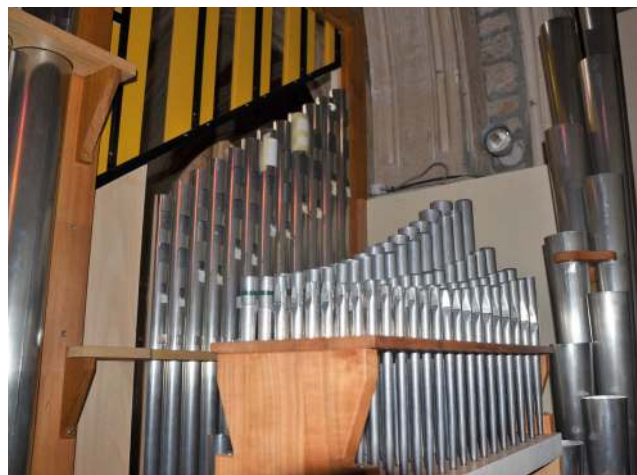
Although this is not a very large organ (27 stops in all), it offers great versatility. The flue-work is round and full. While the Bourdon 8 and Salicional 8 on the Grand-Orgue are soft enough to accompany solo stops on the Récit, the Montre 8 is strong, and a powerful plenum is obtained when the Bourdon 16 and Mixtures are added. ➤

Parish Church of St-Didier-au-Mont-d'Or, France

MICHEL JURINE, OPUS 6 (2014-17)

I.		Flûte octaviante	4
<i>Permanent coupler of II and III, Barker lever</i>		Octavin	2
		Nazard	2 ² / ₃
		Tierce	1 ³ / ₅
II. GRAND ORGUE		Piccolo	1
<i>56 notes</i>		Trompette harmonique	8
Bourdon	16	Basson-Hautbois	8
Montre	8	Voix humaine	8
Prestant	4	<i>Tremulant</i>	
Mixture	II		
Mixture	III-IV	PEDAL	
Bourdon	8	<i>30 notes</i>	
Flûte harmonique	8	Contrebasse	16
Salicional	8	Soubasse (Gt)	16
Cornet	V	Bourdon (Gt)	8
Trompette	8	Principalbass	8
		Octabass	4
		Basson	16
III. RÉCIT EXPRESSIF			
<i>56 notes</i>			
Viole de gambe	8	<i>Couplers II-I, III-I, II-Ped, III-Ped</i>	
Voix céleste	8		
Bourdon harmonique	8	<i>Solid-state memory system by Eltec</i>	





▲ (l) The double-rise pedal bellows with the Barker lever (left background); (r) the Grand-Orgue Cornet is mounted and split into two on both sides as in Cavaillé-Coll's organs

◀ On the Récit, there is a lovely Bourdon Harmonique 8, alongside a fine Viole de gambe 8 and the inevitable romantic Voix celeste 8. The latter can accompany an ethereal Flûte harmonique 8 on the Grand-Orgue, which has a distinct Cavaillé-Coll flair to it. The reeds and the Grand-Orgue Cornet are very French in character. As on all good Cavaillé-Coll organs, it is therefore possible to produce both a characteristic symphonic Grand Chœur, and a classical Grand-Jeu (albeit without a Cromorne). There are very convincing solo reed stops on the Récit, namely a Trompette harmonique 8 and Basson-Hautbois 8, ideal for Franck, and a charming Voix humaine 8, the character of which changes effectively when other stops are added to it. The presence of mutation stops on the Récit and mixtures on the Grand-Orgue make forays into the baroque repertoire possible, as does the bright Cornet. Finally, the pedal department boasts three independent foundation stops: Contrebasse 16, Principalbass 8 and Octabass 4, plus two stops borrowed from the Grand-Orgue, the Bourdon 8 and Soubasse 16. There is only one pedal reed stop, a Basson 16, but the manual reeds can be added with the pedal couplers.

A word must be added concerning the design of the case. Whereas the tonal conception deliberately looks back to the glorious organs of the 19th and early 20th centuries – that is, before the neo-classical disruption was introduced in France by Victor Gonzalez in the 1930s – the case is resolutely modern in appearance, an

asymmetrical play on broken and vertical lines, enhanced by a game of colours and changing reflections of light on transparent plexiglass surfaces. When closed, the console is visible through an oculus in the door panel. Situated at floor level in a lateral chapel, the organ has an arresting presence that contrasts forcibly with the neo-Gothic style of the church. This, of course, is a deliberate stylistic assertion of modernity: Jurine argues that the case is structurally independent from the instrument – built on a separate frame and therefore allowing great freedom of creation – and that it is time to experiment with new ideas in case design. The case was designed by the late architect Frédéric Piat, who worked for the firm on various projects, and it sparked heated discussion when the organ was installed. The result is open for debate, but it no doubt signals Jurine's intention to build an organ that is boldly of today.

A calm, collected, thoughtful and meticulous artist, Michel Jurine has produced a beautiful, interesting and endearing instrument. His vast knowledge and expertise in the instruments of Cavaillé-Coll has enabled him to create an organ that is both in line with the great French 19th-century tradition of organ building, and original and modern in its conception. Thomas Ospital, the brilliant young recitalist and incumbent organist of St-Eustache in Paris, recognised the musical potential of the St-Didier organ and before his recital in October 2018, improvised for several hours, for sheer enjoyment. One can only hope that Michel Jurine will be given

further opportunities to spread his stylistic message and to build more organs of the same ilk. <http://orgues-micheljurine.com/en/company.html> ■

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Michel Jurine and Octavian Saunier, one of the organists of St-Didier-au-Mont d'Or, who welcomed me and presented the organ to me; and to David Ponsford, who kindly read a first draft of the article.

A retired university professor of English, Pierre Dubois is a specialist of 18th-century English music and literature. A self-taught musician, he is titulaire of the historical F.-H. Clicquot organ (1783) of Souvigny, France.

▼ The case reflects the stained-glass windows



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Raised to the power

With an ability to connect with his singers, a perfectionist approach to music, and 'ears like nobody else's', David Willcocks carved out new standards of choral excellence in a depressed post-war Britain and around the world. In this year of his centenary, **David Blackwell** talks to those who worked with him



COURTESY THE BACH CHOIR

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voices in 'O come, all ye faithful' and 'Hark! The herald-angels sing'. All three carols are lifted by superb descants by David Willcocks, soaring above the tune and ringing around the fan vaulting of King's College Chapel, Cambridge. It is the sound of 'choirs of angels', and with the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, Christmas has begun.

Willcocks's relationship with King's makes a kind of rondo form in his life, with King's being the principal subject. He played for the Christmas Eve service in the dark days of December 1939. Then, after completing his three-year MusB degree in one year (with a double first), he left to fight in the second world war, receiving the Military Cross for his

COURTESY JONATHAN WILLCOCKS



PHOTO BY ANTHONY BARRINGTON BROWN, KING'S COLLEGE LIBRARY, CAMBRIDGE, KCAC712/670



COURTESY JONATHAN WILLCOCKS



▲ (clockwise, from top left) Early training as a chorister at Westminster Abbey laid the foundations for David Willcocks's future career; a term (interrupted by the second world war) as organ scholar marked the start of a long association with King's College Cambridge, where he was later organist and master of the choristers for 15 years (below)

◁ actions in Normandy in 1944, before returning to King's as organ scholar in 1945. After a 10-year absence as cathedral organist, first in Salisbury then Worcester, he came back to King's in 1957 as director of music, and there cemented his reputation as one of the finest choral directors of his generation. His post as director of the Royal College of Music took him to London, but he never lived far from King's. In his 80s he was fit, dapper and energetic enough to

leap onto the podium in the chapel at an Association of British Choral Directors convention and lead the delegates in a rousing performance of his 'Sing!', which adds choral parts to Widor's famous organ Toccata. And, in a gentler mood, one of his final compositions was the little carol 'Starry Night', written for the King's Carol Service in 2004.

'He was absolutely obsessive about tuning, ensemble and, of course, correct notes,' recalls Tim Brown, a former

King's choral scholar and later director of music at Clare College, Cambridge; 'nobody had any doubt about what his standards were.' Brian Kay, choral scholar and founder member of the King's Singers, has much the same recollection: 'We took out of the college everything that he had to offer – a sense of pitch, rhythm, blend, all those things, straight down the line from King's.' Right from the start of his career, Willcocks was merciless about mistakes: Henry Sandon, a bass lay clerk at Worcester Cathedral in the 1950s, remembers him 'going around the cathedral in the nave kicking chairs whenever he heard something wrong' in the singing. Choristers had to acknowledge mistakes in rehearsal with a raised hand or confess after a service. All this was in some contrast to the general

'He could charm the birds off the trees ... people would give their lives to sing under him' – Brian Kay

state of cathedral singing after the war. In terms of raising standards, David's achievement was paramount and, for John Rutter, should never be forgotten: 'It's important to acknowledge an absolutely huge debt to David for his care for all those specifics of choral singing: the diction, the rhythm, the pitch, the blend, the vowels.'

In all the choirs he conducted, Willcocks instilled a respect and discipline that inspired the singers to do their best. 'He treated the King's choristers as professional musicians,' recalls his son Jonathan, who sang in the choir; 'he expected exactly the same standards of concentration and punctuality and attention at rehearsals as he did from adults.' And he demanded the same high standards from amateur singers too, whether it was 4,000 at a 'scratch' *Messiah* in the Royal Albert Hall, or holiday-makers on a cruise ship. 'He was incredibly hard-working, pushing

himself harder than anyone else,' recalls Callum Ross, an RCM student during David's directorship there and a Bach Choir singer; 'he set a standard for people to emulate.' Ross mentions another rare Willcocks talent: 'He created a desire such that you *wanted* him to succeed, and were only too happy to help him do so.' 'Amateur singers can almost always do better than they think they can,' adds Simon Carrington, former choral scholar at King's and emeritus professor of choral conducting, Yale University; 'and David was capable of finding that potential in them.'

Willcocks was blessed with exceptional musicianship. Tim Brown recalls him late in life conducting his Clare College choir: 'Here was somebody who had ears like nobody else's, able to spot immediately what's going wrong, what he can improve, what can tighten an ensemble.' He also had an ability to connect with people, playing football with the King's choristers and squash with the choral scholars. Arriving at Salisbury Cathedral to take up his first professional appointment, he found the choristers playing with a rugby ball; he scooped it up 'and gave it a massive kick and it disappeared into the distance,' recalls then probationary chorister Colin Prince. The contrast with the octogenarian Walter Alcock whom he replaced was palpable.

Much of his success with choirs was also due to the famous Willcocks charm and charisma. 'He could charm the birds off the trees,' says Brian Kay; 'people would give their lives to sing under him.' He could make all the singers feel special. Robert Tear recalls how he once asked the women of the Bach Choir, 'How many of you think I am looking at you individually?' and about 200 people put their hands up! He could enliven a rehearsal with a witty anecdote or comment, or do something unexpected to quicken interest. His son Jonathan remembers a choristers' rehearsal at King's interrupted by the siren of a police car; without a pause he had the choristers imitating the siren in an improvised vocal exercise. He demanded the best, and through unflagging energy, enthusiasm and humour achieved that from his singers.

Through many concerts and workshops in America, Willcocks had a similar impact on choirs there. 'He had a profound and pervasive influence on choral music in the United States, both in the church and the concert hall,' says Robert Simpson, founder and artistic director of the Houston Chamber Choir. 'His legendary carol arrangements have been staples of the Christmas season for community, university and church choirs since they first appeared, and his recordings gave us our first taste of the

King's College sound.' 'He was especially hot on tuning,' adds Simon Carrington, and recalls one of Willcocks's classic remarks, 'That note isn't actually flat, but it *might* be flat!', and his constant drive for bright major thirds.

Willcocks's many recordings with both the King's College Choir and London-based Bach Choir were widely influential, and also commercially and critically successful (his recording with the Bach Choir of Britten's *War Requiem* in 1963 won a Grammy award). The

▼ (from top left) Willcocks with Benjamin Britten, whose *War Requiem* he recorded in 1963, winning a Grammy award; as director of the Royal College of Music, with Herbert Howells; and conducting the Bach Choir in a performance of Bach's B minor Mass in 1976



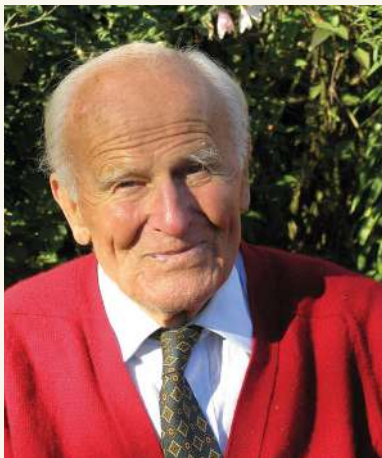
COURTESY JONATHAN WILLCOCKS



COURTESY JONATHAN WILLCOCKS



COURTESY THE BACH CHOIR



TIMELINE

1919 Born in Newquay, Cornwall
 1929-34 Chorister at Westminster Abbey
 1934-38 Music scholar, Clifton College
 1939 Entered King's College, Cambridge, as organ scholar
 1941-45 Army service during the second world war; awarded Military Cross (1944)
 1945 Returned to King's College to complete studies
 1947 Appointed conductor of Cambridge Philharmonic Society and Salisbury Choral Society, and organist of Salisbury Cathedral
 1950 Appointed organist of Worcester Cathedral; conducted Three Choirs Festival in 1951, 1954 and 1957; conductor of City of Birmingham Choir
 1956 Appointed conductor of Bradford Festival Choral Society; remained a guest conductor until the 1990s
 1959-74 Organist and master of the choristers, King's College, Cambridge
 1960 Appointed conductor of Bach Choir
 1961 Co-edited *Carols for Choirs* book 1 with Reginald Jacques (Oxford University Press); co-editor, with John Rutter, of book 2 (1970), book 3 (1978), book 4 (1980), and *100 Carols of Choirs* (1987).
 1974-85 Director of the Royal College of Music, London
 1971 Appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE)
 1977 Created a Knight Bachelor
 2010 Celebration of his contribution to music held at Royal Albert Hall on 15 May
 2015 Died on 17 September in Cambridge

◀ baroque recordings reveal his unerring sense of the right tempo, as well as an absolute rhythmic precision in faster passages. Even with large forces, he could achieve a light and well-articulated performance, and his sure sense of the flow of the music always made the music compelling. He was equally at home recording an intimate renaissance Mass or Vaughan Williams's *Hodie* (which he commissioned), but perhaps especially so in his highly successful recordings of Anglican psalms, where his life-long commitment to these texts and his determination to communicate their moods and colours with musical phrasing and clarity of diction is readily apparent.

For Stephen Cleobury, Willcocks's successor plus one at King's, his legacy with the choir was to broaden its repertoire and make it much better known through recordings and TV: 'His influence on the standards in choral singing was immense here, or course,

but also worldwide,' he says. 'Many of the things we all strive now to do were made "desiderata" by him.'

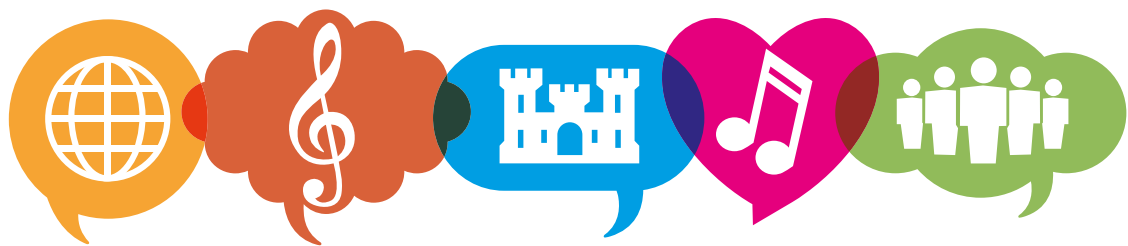
Music was always scrupulously prepared, whether it was for an early morning Matins in a near-empty cathedral or an estimated global television audience of 750 million for the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer in 1981. 'People who rehearse well almost always perform well,' he said. He drilled his singers until perfection beckoned and to a point where they could relax their voices in performance and sing confidently and musically. In the year in which he would have reached his 100th birthday, we can only marvel and rejoice at his achievement, and hope that, as he directs the angels in heaven in those celestial descants, their tuning satisfies his incessant drive to musical perfection. ■

David Blackwell is a freelance writer, composer and arranger.

▼ Indefatigable to the end: a workshop with the BBC Singers in his latter years



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Three's company

For its 30th biennial Congress, the International Society of Organbuilders took the unusual step of organising a trans-national event in Ljubljana (Slovenia), Murau (Austria) and Udine (Italy) – three cities a hundred miles apart, but each boasting a local builder and a distinctive organ patrimony. **Thomas Murray-Robertson** reports

The ISO's 2018 Congress opened on 23 September with a splendid performance of traditional Slovenian choral music in the Ljubljana Academy of Music, which houses a 1979 Kuhn organ originally from St Josef's Church, Horgen, Switzerland. This immediately highlighted the fact that the

organ is highly appreciated in Slovenia, not least because of the enthusiasm of professor of organ Dalibor Miklavčič – a former president of the Slovenian Organ Society – whose presentations throughout the Congress heralded a positive future for the next generation of organists in this part of Europe.

The following day in Ljubljana provided a salutary lesson in what can be achieved in terms of restoration and new organ building in Slovenia, but equally highlighted the sad state of instruments desperately in need of a huge amount of work. With the main organ in the Cathedral of St Nicholas virtually untouched since 1911

▼ The striking case of the main organ in St Nicholas Cathedral, Ljubljana





◀ – and only half of it tuned and in working order – a demonstration initially appeared pointless. Nevertheless, there was a chance to appreciate both the striking casework with its intriguing proportions, combining disparate styles and periods of construction, and the variety of fine 8ft voices. Given their location each side of the main case, the Pedal towers are understandably inspired by German tradition; equally, the two Choir organs positioned in near mirror image to the main organ draw obvious stylistic parallels with Italian models: this attractive clash of styles epitomises Slovenian organ building, reflecting and drawing inspiration from its geographical position, where the Congress's three host countries meet.

By contrast, the carefully-restored organ in the Ursuline Church offered an excellent opportunity to inspect a very fine romantic instrument built by Franc Goršič in 1891. If the German influence is visually and audibly clear, this organ definitely has what one could describe as a Slovenian soul. The absence of swell boxes is curious, but the generous provision of 8ft stops allows sufficient flexibility to alleviate any concern for dynamic balance.

Finally, a visit to the Parish Church of St Francis in Ljubljana-Šiška revealed a fine example of an organ built as recently as 2007 in French-inspired romantic-symphonic style by the Slovenian firm of Močnik. One of the many benefits of attending an ISO congress is the sharing of thoughts and ideas with international colleagues: on this particular occasion, it was fascinating to learn about Tomaž Močnik's approach and philosophy regarding the scaling and voicing of an organ regarded as a masterpiece, winning wide respect and admiration, in particular from French visitors.

Next morning offered the chance to hear and discuss with its builder Tomaž Močnik another widely acclaimed instrument, in the picturesque setting of the Velesovo Monastery, near Močnik's base in Cerklje. Also built in 2007, this II/41 instrument is

▼ The organ by Tomaž Močnik (2007) for Velesovo Monastery was inspired by the work of Gottfried Silbermann and Zacharias Hildebrandt

◀ At Congress, the opportunity to meet and share ideas is as important as the organs



strongly inspired by those built in Saxony during the first half of the 18th century by Gottfried Silbermann and Zacharias Hildebrandt. The result was equally impressive from both a conceptual and musical point of view.

The visit to the newly-built Močnik workshop which followed also showed how well the firm is set up, both in terms of space and the provision of CNC (Computer Numerical Control) machining. Notwithstanding the importance to organ building of this Slovenian company, the production of furniture as a parallel business is perhaps an inevitable reflection of present-day reality. The revelation that the two Močnik organs mentioned earlier were apparently built for around a third of the price compared to other established European companies – a fact which initially raised a few eyebrows – could be largely attributed to the lower wages of Slovenian workers.

Moving on to Austria, apart from Klagenfurt Cathedral's III/35 Rieger choir organ built in 2016, and the III/35 main organ by the Swiss firm of Mathis Orgelbau (1986), the visits concentrated on relatively small historical instruments, the majority of which have been beautifully restored by the Austrian builder Walter Vonbank. Each organ was brilliantly displayed in recitals tailored closely to the specifications by Martin Riccabona, Franziska Leuschner and Melissa Dermastia, who demonstrated the exquisite Metzler-restored 1735 Martin Jäger organ in the Pilgrimage Church of the Assumption of Mary in Maria Saal.

In Murau, delegates visited the Parish Church (Greß organ 1776, restored Vonbank 2000), viewed a transportable organ for use in processions, and finished at the Capuchin Church which houses an organ built by Vonbank in 2007. The firm was faced with the challenge of providing an instrument of maximum versatility for both concerts and teaching, but on a small budget. Walter's wife Uli drew up a striking casework design in red, with a

✓ The 1735 Martin Jäger organ, restored by Metzler, in the Pilgrimage Church of the Assumption of Mary in Maria Saal

► A golden 'halo' in the case of the 2007 Vonbank organ for the Capuchin Church in Murau frames the west gallery window



STEFAN SCHWINGER



VONBANK ORGELBAU

FABBRICA ORGANI ZANIN



◀ gold 'halo' to frame a round window above the church's west gallery. With virtually the entire pipework made of 97.5 per cent lead, including the display pipes, the resulting sound could best be described as warm and, like the casework, successfully complementing the ambience of this small church. Situated in nearby Triebendorf, the Vonbank works – an ergonomic and energy-efficient building with its own well-equipped metal shop – offers its employees spectacular views of the Murau valley. For its ISO audience, Vonbank organised a concert of traditional Styrian folk music sung by a local group. Then the firm's Opus 1 chamber organ was played in duet with their most recent practice organ: an instrument which boasts an ingenious design enabling separation of the first manual from the rest of the instrument, thus transforming it into a transportable box organ.

The old narrow-gauge railway line from Murau to Tamsweg, which complements its schedule with runs hauled by historic steam and diesel engines, provided transport for ISO delegates to the Church of St Leonhard in Tamsweg. A noted pilgrimage church from medieval times, the church is remarkable for, among other things, a highly unusual stained glass window, endowed by Archbishop Johann II (1431-42), which is made up solely of gold and blue panes. The I/12 organ was built in 1838 by Johann Dummel, and restored by Vonbank in 2007.

The final country visited on this touring ISO Congress was Italy. The first stop, in Valvasone, included two extraordinary organs. In the Cathedral of Corpus Christi, the richly painted casework of the 1533 organ, said to be the only working Venetian organ of the 16th-century, built by Vincenzo Colombi, promised something very special: Christopher Stenbridge presented the instrument by drawing stops at different octaves or pitches to demonstrate the temperament. Sadly,

▼ The richly painted casework of the 1533 organ by Vincenzo Colombi in Corpus Christi Cathedral, Valvasone, thought to be the only working Venetian organ of the 16th century

◀ The organ in the Church of SS. Pietro e Paolo, built by an unknown maker around 1600 and restored by Alfredo Piccinelli

FABBRICA ORGANI ZANIN



the much-altered soundboard had to be reconstructed by Francesco Zanin in 1999 but fortunately the original pipework has survived and remains largely unchanged. Straightaway, the calm and freshness of the traditional Italian sound was recognisable through very low wind pressures (43mm) and unusual pipe nicking.

In addition, a tiny jewel of an organ in the Church of SS. Pietro e Paolo, built by an unknown maker around 1600 and restored by Alfredo Piccinelli, touched delegates with its authenticity and modest stop list: 4ft, 2ft, 1ft. This was originally a transportable instrument with two bellows at the rear, made to rest on a table.

In 1850, Valentino Zanin – founder of the Codroipo, Udine firm which still bears his name – built an instrument for the Parish Church of S. Lorenzo Martire in Talmassons. This organ offered revealing insights into what was achieved in Italian organ construction during this period, including typical ingredients such as flute choruses, a Cornetta $1\frac{3}{5}$, Campanini (bells) and Timpani (two pipes tuned a tone from each other, creating a sort of rumble). One hundred and fifty-five years later, Francesco Zanin, seventh-generation director of the same firm, carried out a meticulous restoration of the instrument. Another highlight of the 2018 Congress was therefore a visit to the Zanin workshop: an assembly hall filled with Italian organs of all types and ages suggested that the order book for both restorations and new builds was satisfyingly healthy. ■

www.internationalorganbuilders.com

After gaining experience in England and Switzerland (where he was born and trained), Thomas Murray-Robertson now works for Orgelbau Goll in Lucerne.

▼ Congress participants inspect the console of the Močnik organ in Ljubljana Šiška



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Freestyle BY GRAEME KAY

Bach: the soundtrack of so many lives

Fresh in our ears last autumn was Sir András Schiff's astonishing feat of performing Bach's '48' Preludes and Fugues at the BBC Proms. Book 2, which completed the cycle after Book 1 in 2017, was performed late at night on live TV, and repeated over Christmas. Sitting in a pool of light in the vast, darkened spaces of the great circular Royal Albert Hall, Schiff's solitary presence on stage was an apt visual metaphor for the music: a universe in microcosm (Bartók surely had the right idea when he called his suite of 153 progressive piano pieces *Mikrokosmos*). Schiff is one in a long line of Bach piano interpreters who have bared their souls in this music, bald on the page, yet revealing so much of the character of the performer. In my lifetime, coming before Schiff, that soul-baring has been transmitted through the hands of such diverse artistic personalities as Glenn Gould, Tatyana Nikolayeva, Murray Perahia, Keith Jarrett and Angela Hewitt.

Now it looks as though another performer wants to nudge these giants along and off the piano stool to make way for him. Hailed by the *New York Times* with the unhelpful and silly epithet 'Iceland's Glenn Gould' (I definitely don't hear him singing along with the music...) is Víkingur Ólafsson, who burst on the scene post-Proms with a new Bach recording on DG [483 5022]. While *Le Monde* couldn't resist an obvious but misleading reference to Ólafsson's home country – 'Volcanic temperament, great virtuosity, a taste for challenges' – the more sober *Gramophone* settled for 'Ólafsson's interpretations inhabit a unique, distinct and extraordinary world all their own.' Making a more thoughtful allusion to Gould, the reviewer continued, 'Ólafsson possesses that rare gift of illuminating a familiar work in unexpected ways, revealing hidden depths and drawing out its best qualities.'

Well, in the face of those sorts of testimonials, and having an inexhaustible appetite for Bach in almost any form, I had to check this out. Part of the attraction of the album is that it is deliberately programmed for a straight-through listen of 77 minutes. So the upbeat opening bars of the Prelude & Fuguetta in G major BWV 902 are mirrored by the concluding work, described by Ólafsson as 'the tragic and existential A minor Fantasia & Fugue' which uses the same motif. In between, the programme intersperses keyboard preludes and fugues, arias and variations, inventions, a harpsichord concerto, an arrangement of part of the Organ Sonata no.4 BWV 528 by August Stradal, and organ chorale preludes 'Nun komm der Heiden Heiland' BWV 659 and 'Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ' BWV 639 arranged by Busoni, and 'Nun freut euch' BWV 734 by Wilhelm Kempff.

Ólafsson points to the keyboard works revealing the full complexity of Bach's character: 'his sense of humour, his rhetorical flair and penchant for provocation, in addition to his philosophical depth and spiritual exaltation.' A wise old teacher once told him that 'Bach is a free country.' Ólafsson observes that 'Bach today generally sounds quite different from Bach 30 years ago, and still more different from Bach 50 years ago. In that sense his music is contemporary rather than classical. It has the potential to feel more or less as new today as it did 300 years ago.'

On the evidence of this luminous recording, it's only a matter of time before Víkingur Ólafsson's '48' will be hitting the shelves. ■

Graeme Kay is a digital platforms producer for BBC Radio 3 and 4.



▲ 'A rare gift': Víkingur Ólafsson

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WIN

In April 2016, the London Oriana Choir launched a five-year project to commission new choral works from women composers (see feature, p.54). Current composer-in-residence is Jessica Curry (pictured, with Dominic Ellis-Peckham), whose second piece for the choir will be premiered in their concert on 16 March, alongside Orff's *Carmina burana*.

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KATHLEEN HOLMAN

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NEW MUSIC

Seamus Heath All Fives

for solo organ

Seamus Heath talks to **Shirley Ratcliffe** about Miles Davis, Stockhausen, and attitudes to playing historical music



NARRATIVE MUSIC/HARVARD

▲ 'My music comes mostly from improvising': Seamus Heath

The son of composer-flautist Dave Heath and vocalist Angela Tunstall, Seamus Heath is studying physics at the University of St Andrews. Although born into a musical family, he is undecided about the direction of his future career, he explains: 'I decided not to study music, which makes things less clear on that front; and, as well as physics, I am also passionate about maths. So at the minute I'm trying to learn as much as I can and see where that takes me.'

Music came into Heath's life at an early age, but it wasn't until he was eight that he became really interested: 'My older brother used to play Bach on the piano, and afterwards I used to sit there for hours trying to work the music out for myself. At the time I could barely read music, but that was where it all began.'

Having decided that he loved music and wanted to study it, the young musician auditioned for the Purcell School: 'I remember one of my parents getting me to compose something to take into the audition – it was just a little piano piece. I wasn't enjoying my primary school much and Purcell was where most of my brothers went, so when they offered me a place I just took it.' He studied composition and piano there, and when the family moved to Scotland he continued these studies, with the addition of harpsichord at St Mary's School in Edinburgh. In his last year he learnt the organ with John Kitchen: 'I took up the organ because I think it's such a powerful instrument and it's also got some great repertoire. It wasn't such a far adjustment from the piano, and playing

the harpsichord made things easier. It opened up a whole other world of music that I was really interested in at that time.' Heath is currently Watterson Organ Scholar at the University of St Andrews, where he accompanies the Choir of St Salvator's Chapel. How does he fit his organ duties into his curriculum? 'There are three of us organ scholars at the minute, so the workload is split between us. It is time-consuming as we all have to be there for more or less every rehearsal, but we all end up doing more page-turning than actual playing – so I still have a lot of free time!'

Heath has had performance experience at many prestigious venues: 'My favourite was playing at the Madeleine in Paris: the choir was doing a concert and I had an organ solo. The building is monumental,

►

All Fives for full organ and pedals

Seamus HEATH (b.1998)

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Pedals

5

Oboe/Fonds Sw. *P*

10

Gt. *mf*

15

Pos. *mf*

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The premiere of *All Fives* takes place during a recital given by Seamus Heath at 1.10pm on Tuesday 26 February in St Salvator's Chapel, University of St Andrews.

and to get anywhere near the organ you have to go through endlessly winding little staircases. At the top I was met by their organist who had come to help with the stops. He's an excellent player, which made me nervous but excited! The organ was like a spaceship too, but great to play.'

When it comes to his tutors, Heath doesn't name individual influences, but says: 'The best composition teacher I ever had just encouraged me and tried to open me out to more music. His philosophy was that the best teachers are the ones that help you to discover things for yourself, or at least make it seem that way. But I've always found it interesting to get fresh ears on the music, whether I've ended up taking the advice or not.'

As for composers, Heath's current choices are very diverse. 'I am very influenced by [jazz trumpeter] Miles Davis and Karlheinz Stockhausen. I am interested in improvisation, and these musicians were both pioneers for that: they've given me a

'Remembrance Sunday got me thinking about war and memory, and what this meant for music and form'

really strong idea of what's actually possible. These days, when historic pieces are repeated more and more, it seems to me that people have become so reverential to the point that the idea of these refined and expressive pieces being no more than written down improvisations starts to feel utterly ludicrous; modern technology capturing musicians like Miles Davis and other great improvisers utterly disproves this, and I find it really inspiring. I am influenced by so much music; at the time I wrote *All Fives*, I was listening to a lot of Shostakovich, Prokofiev and Bach, it's all influential.'

Finally we talk about his commission for *C&O* and composing generally. 'Well, I'd say my music comes mostly from improvisation, especially these days. I don't compose as much as I used to, mainly because that slightly painful process of

having to slow the thing down in your head enough to write feels slightly redundant when you can just record improvisations and rework them from that. So most of the piece for *Choir & Organ* was reconstructed from improvisations that I either recorded or remembered enough to write down.

'One of the interesting registrational possibilities of the organ is the doubling of notes and whole chords at the fifth. This has interesting harmonic as well as modal implications, and forms the basis of *All Fives*, which is really an experiment in perfect fifths and modal harmony. The form of the piece seems somewhat unusual in that the beginning is, fundamentally, a variation of the raw material, which is presented at the end. While it would seem more logical to have this the other way around, this inverted form is, in fact, unavoidably conventional.'

Heath explains that he wrote the piece shortly after Remembrance Sunday: 'It's not directly connected, in the sense it wasn't something I consciously built into the piece, but it definitely influenced my thought processes, maybe even my approach. It got me thinking about war and memory

in general, and what this meant for music and form. I think peoples' understanding of a past event is often so grounded in the elaborate subsequent versions that their impressions of the event as a whole must have changed quite dramatically from what was originally understood. The same applies in music too. At the end of most sets of variations the theme is repeated in some form, but the variations have almost redefined it, uncovered some new meaning. In the case of *All Fives* the initial idea is followed immediately by a variation which then falls into a kind of meditation. The raw material ultimately emerges and is heard in its purest form.

'I am not aiming to create any one unanimous atmosphere – it's something I believe in but am not consciously aiming for.' ■

INSIDE JOB

Opportunities for organ scholars at the University of St Andrews

The University of St Andrews has become well-known for the opportunities it gives to young musicians and vocalists studying for degrees in other disciplines. This extends to young organists, who enjoy a multitude of possibilities to hone their skills.

With the busy schedule of St Salvator's Chapel Choir comes a need for extensive liturgical accompaniment, most of which is undertaken by holders of organ scholarships made possible thanks to the generosity of alumnus Campbell Watterson. At present there are three such scholars, including two first-year mathematicians, and this flexibility in numbers sets St Andrews apart from the

traditional English collegiate structure.

'The three sung services each week in St Salvator's Chapel comprise two Anglican Evensongs and an ecumenical University Service on Sunday morning, so the demand on the organ scholars to learn repertoire quickly is considerable,' says Claire Innes-Hopkins, acting university organist and director of chapel choirs. 'The distance between the organ loft at the west end and the choir stalls is significant, so the

'Scholars must get used to following the conductor on the monitor and playing ahead of what they hear'

scholars also have to get used to following the conductor on the monitor and playing ahead of what they hear.' Aside from the liturgical commitment, the organ scholars perform a recital in the weekly organ series once per semester, tour with the choir,

and accompany them in concerts and on recordings. 'This spring the choir is touring in France,' says Innes-Hopkins, 'where the organ scholars will have the opportunity to perform on a late 17th-century French classical organ and a Cavaillé-Coll; fantastic and memorable experiences which will greatly inform their playing and musicianship.' Organ scholars are also encouraged to compose and to conduct depending on their interests.

St Andrews's scholarships allow the holders to undertake weekly organ lessons with the university organist. In addition, the university is fortunate to have Henry Fairs as visiting professor of organ, in which role he teaches three times per academic year. The Music Centre also facilitates international study trips: recent travels have included improvisation lessons with Sietze de Vries on historic organs in Groningen, and a trip to study classical and 19th-century French organs in Orléans, Burgundy. In 2019 the scholars will participate in the organ academy at Orgelfestival Holland in Alkmaar.

St Andrews's other university chapel, St Leonard's, also provides opportunities to organists not yet experienced enough to accompany in St Salvator's. The weekly service of Compline on Thursday evenings is sung by a volunteer choir supplemented by a number of St Leonard's-specific choral scholars. A scholarship given in memory of the Revd Douglas Gifford, long-time professor of Spanish and founder of both the University's Renaissance Singers and the St Leonard's Choir (then called the 'Compline Choir') allows a keen choral conducting student to direct the music at this service and have conducting lessons in the Music Centre. The services are accompanied by student organists, under the guidance of the university organist.

Chris Bragg, Concerts, Performance and Events Administrator, University of St Andrews

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Criticism generally has concentrated more and more on the material values of music and less on the spiritual. In other words, it has been and still is concerning itself almost exclusively with that which it calls technique, with little regard for anything else. In so doing it has mistaken the means for the end, the essential for the quintessential; and the result is that we have a standardized technique in every branch of the art, before which all have agreed to bow, save one dissenting group, the really musical.

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FESTIVALS 2019

Dates for your diary

JANUARY-MARCH

Canadian International Organ Competition - Frozen Pipes

18 Jan-30 Mar, Montreal, Canada

See separate box, right.

ciocm.org

MARCH

Oslo International Church Music Festival

22-31 Mar, Oslo, Norway

Box office +47 815 33 133, billettservice.no@oicmf.no

Fiestalonia - Golden Voices of Montserrat

24-28 Mar, Spain

Contact +34 972 376550,
info@fiestaloniamontserrat.net
fiestaloniamontserrat.net

London Handel Festival

27 Mar-29 Apr, London, UK

Box office boxoffice@londonhandelfestival.org.uk
london-handel-festival.com

APRIL

Passiontide at Merton

12-14 Apr, Merton College, Oxford, UK

Box office +44 1865 305305
mertoncollegechoir.com

Holy Week Festival

14-20 Apr, St John's Smith Square, London, UK

Box office +44 20 7222 1061, or in person at St John's Smith Square
sjss.org.uk

International Choral Festival Wales

19-21 Apr, Cardiff, UK

Contact 58 Drum Tower View, Caerphilly CF83 2XW or via website
internationalchoralfestival.wales

Fiestalonia - World of Choirs

28 Apr-1 May, Pesaro, Italy

Contact +34 972 376550,
info@fiestaloniamontserrat.net
fiestaloniamontserrat.net

MAY

Westminster Cathedral Grand Organ Festival

May-Oct, London, UK

See separate box, overleaf.
westminstercathedralchoir.com

Leeds International Organ Festival

13 May-8 Jul, Leeds, UK

leedsiof.org

Cork International Choral Festival

1-5 May, Cork, Republic of Ireland

Box office bit.ly/2DOY627
corkchoral.ie

Cornwall International Male Voice Choir Festival

2-6 May, Cornwall, UK

Contact Gareth Churcher (festival director)
+44 1872 246043, director@cimcf.uk
cimcf.uk

Sounds Thrilling! - Orford Organ Festival

10-12 May, St Bartholomew's, Orford, UK

Contact orfordorganproject@gmail.com
orfordorganproject.com

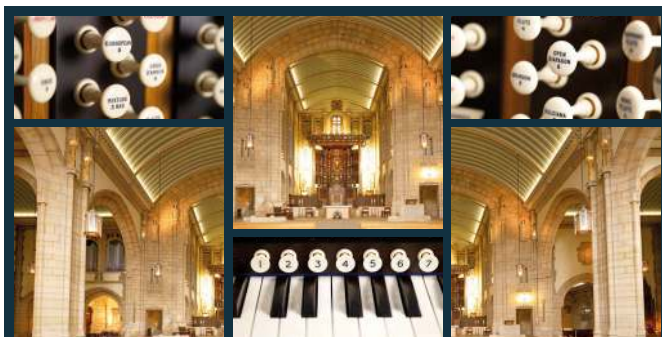
Canadian International Organ Competition - Frozen Pipes

18 Jan-30 Mar, Montreal, Canada

A new winter festival helps organ fans in Montreal keep warm by listening to world-class music during the frigid Canadian winter. Highlights include a recital by Westminster Abbey organist James O'Donnell (20 Feb) and an improvisation concert (30 Mar) featuring CIOC artistic director Jean-Willy Kunz, and 2017 winner Alcee Chriss (pictured).

Contact +1 514 510 5678, info@ciocm.org, Concours international d'orgue du Canada, 606 rue Cathcart, bureau 335, Montreal (Quebec) H3B 1K9
ciocm.org





LEEDS INTERNATIONAL ORGAN FESTIVAL

MONDAY LUNCHTIME RECITALS (LEEDS CATHEDRAL, 1.10 - 2.00 PM)

- 13/05 Darius Battiwalla (Leeds City Organist)
- 20/05 Thomas Leech (Diocese of Leeds)
- 03/06 Nigel Ogden (Theatre organist)
- 10/06 Anthony Hammond (Concert organist)
- 17/06 Benjamin Saunders (Diocese of Leeds)
- 24/06 Ourania Gassiou (Organist, Athens Concert Hall)
- 01/07 Thomas Heywood (Concert organist, Melbourne, Australia)
- 08/07 David Pipe (Diocese of Leeds)

OTHER 2019 FESTIVAL EVENTS INCLUDE:

- 01/06 Come and Sing Haydn, led by David Pipe
- 03/06 Nigel Ogden - 'The Theatre Organ' Masterclass
- 11/06 Sir James MacMillan in conversation with Richard Mantle OBE

More information on all festival events including Evening Concerts, Lectures and Masterclasses can be found at:



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10-18 May, venues in London, UK

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Bath International Music Festival

17-26 May, Bath, UK

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sallyreeves@btinternet.com
bit.ly/2Dy327c

English Music Festival

24-27 May, Oxfordshire, UK

Contact Em Marshall-Luck, +1 7808 473889,
em.marshall-luck@englishmusicfestival.org.uk
englishmusicfestival.org.uk

Spoletto Festival USA

23 May-9 Jun, Charleston, SC, US

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JUNE

Limerick Sings - International Choral Festival Ireland

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Aldeburgh Festival

7-23 Jun, Suffolk, UK

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aldeburgh.co.uk

Bachfest Leipzig

14-23 Jun, Leipzig, Germany

Contact +49 341 9137-300,
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Germany
bachfestleipzig.de

Organ Festival Holland

21-28 Jun, Alkmaar, Netherlands

See separate box, overleaf.
orgelfestivalholland.nl

St Magnus International Festival

21-26 Jun, Orkney, UK

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East Neuk Festival

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Deal Music and Arts Festival

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JULY

Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod

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Changing Tides - Halifax Organ Festival

7-11 Jul, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

changingtides2019.ca

Oundle International Festival

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oundlefestival.org.uk

JAM on the Marsh

4-14 Jul, Romney Marsh, Kent, UK

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jamconcert.org

Cheltenham Music Festival

5-14 Jul, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, UK

Contact +44 1242 850270, or in person
at 15 Suffolk Parade, Cheltenham GL50 2AE
cheltenhamfestivals.com/music

York Early Music Festival

5-13 Jul, York, UK

Contact +44 1904 632220, info@ncem.
co.uk; (Box Office: +44 1904 658338,
boxoffice@ncem.co.uk), National Centre
for Early Music, St Margaret's Church,
Walmgate, York YO1 9TL
nncem.co.uk

St Albans International Organ Festival

8-20 Jul, St Albans, Hertfordshire, UK

Contact The Administrator, +44 1727
844765, administrator@organfestival.com
organfestival.com

BBC Proms

19 Jul-14 Sep, London, UK

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proms@bbc.co.uk
bbc.co.uk/proms

King's Lynn Festival

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Westminster Abbey Summer Organ Festival

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westminster-abbey.org

Southern Cathedrals Festival

17-20 Jul, Chichester, UK

southerncathedralsfestival.org.uk

Three Choirs Festival

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3choirs.org

Musica Deo Sacra

30 Jul-5 Aug, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, UK

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tewkesburyabbey.org.uk

◀ AUGUST

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Edinburgh International Festival

2-26 Aug, Edinburgh, UK

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www.eif.co.uk

Lahti Organ Festival

5-11 Aug, Lahti, Finland

Contact urkuviikko@lahtiorgan.fi

lahtiorgan.fi

Norfolk Chamber Choir & Choral Conducting Workshop

11-18 Aug, Norfolk, Connecticut, USA

Contact norfolk@yale.edu

norfolk.yale.edu

Edington Festival

18-25 Aug, Edington, Wiltshire, UK

Contact +44 7525 793426,

info@edingtonfestival.org

edingtonfestival.org

Presteigne Festival

22-27 Aug, Presteigne, UK

Contact +44 1544 267800,

georgevass@presteignefestival.com

presteignefestival.com

SEPTEMBER

Norwegian Organ Festival

12-15 Sep, Stavanger and area, Norway

Contact arnfinn.tobiassen@stavanger.kommune.no

kommune.no

orgelfestival.no

Organ Space Festival

12-15 Sep, Stockholm, Sweden

Contact +46 702899487, info@organspace.se

organspace.se

OCTOBER

The Cumnock Tryst

3-6 Oct, Cumnock, Ayrshire, UK

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info@thecumnocktryst.com

thecumnocktryst.com

Toulouse les Orgues Festival

2-13 Oct, Toulouse and region, France

Contact infos@toulouse-les-orgues.org

toulouse-les-orgues.org

St Andrews Voices

17-19 Oct, St Andrews, Fife, UK

Contact +44 1334 462 226

standrewsvoices@gmail.com

standrewsvoices.com

City of Derry International Choral Festival and Competition

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NOVEMBER

Malta International Choir Festival

Nov (dates tbc), Malta

Contact +356 22915560,

martin.morana@visitmalta.com

visitmalta.com

DECEMBER

Spitalfields Music Winter Festival

Nov/Dec [dates tbc], London, UK

Contact Box office +44 20 7377 1362,

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spitalfieldsmusic.org.uk

FESTIVALS 2020

Mayfield Festival

26 Apr-10 May, Mayfield, Sussex, UK

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mayfieldfestival.co.uk

Helsingborgs Körfestival

27-31 May, Helsingborg, Sweden

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12th World Symposium on Choral Music

11-18 Jul, New Zealand

wscm2020.com

International Organ Festival Haarlem

18 Jul -1 Aug 2020, Haarlem, Netherlands

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Cutting edge

The relative sidelining of music by female composers prompted an imaginative five-year commissioning programme by the London Oriana Choir. **Clare Stevens reports.** PHOTOS BY KATHLEEN HOLMAN

From community groups to the country's top professional chamber ensembles, there is a choir in London to suit every singer, whatever their ability or experience. Until recently the London Oriana Choir, founded by Leon Lovett in 1973 as a London Education Authority evening class, was distinguished primarily by its versatility, offering singers the opportunity to take part in events such as launching the winter season at Disneyland Paris and Arena concerts with artists such as Barbra Streisand or Robert Plant, as well as performing the standard choral classics and a wide range of other repertoire. But its current USP is a five-year commitment to commissioning and programming works by women composers, launched in April 2016 as five15.

The scale of the project is genuinely remarkable. At its heart are the commissions: each year the choir works with a different female composer who writes two short-form a cappella pieces (one of which is a Christmas carol) and one longer work of 15 minutes or more with instrumental accompaniment, to be performed at concerts in the UK and on Oriana's annual overseas tour. Music by women features prominently in all the choir's programming during this period, and one concert each season is devoted entirely to women composers.

The first five15 composer-in-residence was Cheryl Frances-Hoad, whose *So true a fool is love* was premiered at a launch concert in the spectacular setting of one of Oriana's regular performance venues, the Sammy Ofer Gallery underneath the historic tea clipper Cutty Sark at Greenwich, south-east London. Frances-Hoad's carol

The Tym is all Ronne was included in Christmas concerts that year, alongside five other works by women. Her final commission – *The Food of Love*, premiered by the choir and the Meridian Sinfonia at St Martin-in-the-Fields church in March 2017 – was a setting of texts by Christina Rossetti and Jonathan Swift, celebrating onions, oysters, melons, plums and other gourmet delights; it was described by *Observer* reviewer Fiona Maddocks as 'joyful and rampant'.

'Each of our composers so far has been refreshingly different, both in their musical style and in their approach to the commissions,' says Oriana's musical director, Dominic Ellis-Peckham. 'Rather than presenting us with finished works, Cheryl wanted to watch the music grow and change as we learned the pieces. She exploited the particular strengths of different sections of the choir, such as our very strong tenor section, and we saw her learn from us as the process developed.'

The choir's second composer-in-residence was Rebecca Dale, who has written extensively for film and TV as well as for classical ensembles and recently became the first woman composer to be signed by Universal Music's Decca Classics label; her first commission, *Radiate*, was premiered in July 2017 in another Cutty Sark concert. That event also included the world premiere of *These things shall be* by Bristol-born Ailsa Dixon, a music graduate of Durham University in the 1950s whose compositions remained largely unknown and unperformed. Dixon's daughter Josie had happened to meet Ellis-Peckham at a time when she was wondering how to celebrate her mother's 85th birthday. She



showed him a score of *These things shall be* and he immediately programmed it for the forthcoming concert. Ailsa Dixon attended the concert, along with fellow composers Dobrinka Tabakova, Kerry Andrew, Dale and Frances-Hoad. Just five weeks later she died, and the Oriana Choir performed her anthem again in tribute to her memory at Remembrance concerts in London and Bristol in November that year.

'That experience of enabling Ailsa to hear her piece for the first time at the very end of her life made us realise how important this project is,' says Ellis-Peckham. 'It is not just for young women – it is about giving



▲ The London Oriana Choir performing in the Sammy Ofer Gallery below the historic Cutty Sark tea clipper at Greenwich

recognition to the many female composers over the centuries whose music has been neglected. They include even such a famous name as Dame Ethel Smyth, whose wonderful Mass in D we performed last November in Southwark Cathedral – hardly any of the performers or audience had heard it before.

It isn't the first time the Oriana Choir has championed this cause. In March 2003, under its previous musical director David Drummond, a piece by Sophie Viney was performed under the auspices of the Society for Promotion of New Music's Adopt a Composer scheme. In 2011 and 2013

concerts on International Women's Day were devoted exclusively to the music of women, including Elena Kats-Chernin, Lili Boulanger, Sally Beamish, Judith Weir, and Grace Williams.

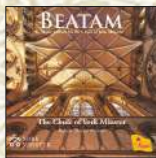
The current project was devised following a successful 40th anniversary season in 2013/14, Ellis-Peckham's first, which featured Toby Young as the choir's first ever composer-in-residence. 'We were thinking about what we could do next to make a contribution to the choral community,' explains Ellis-Peckham, 'and we realised that the inequality of representation between male and female

composers in concert programming was a serious issue.'

Five15 was the result. It is underpinned by Oriana's own survey of a representative quota sample of 981 people aged 16-75 in Great Britain, commissioned from the market research company Ipsos MORI in February and March 2016. Asked to name any composer of symphonic or choral music, only 3 per cent of the respondents named a woman. When asked specifically to name a woman composer, only 4 per cent of adults could do so. Among those who could, the most frequently named female composers were Clara Schumann ▶



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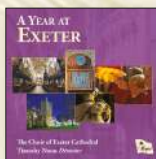


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- Interpretation competition – 8-13 September 2019
- Master classes by jury members – 13 and 14 September 2019
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- Max. number of admitted candidates: 40
- Program – **for the main part freely set up by the candidate**
- Application deadline – **15th July 2019**

Information, online application form and contact
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◀ (12 mentions), Hildegard of Bingen (5), Fanny Mendelssohn (4) and Judith Weir (4).

'We realised from the start that outreach needed to be part of the project,' says Ellis-Peckham. 'We want to do our bit to train the next generation of women composers – girls are often enthusiastic about composition in primary and early secondary school, but there seems to be a black hole at around the ages of 16-18 when they are dissuaded from serious careers. Sometimes they are inhibited by their lack of theoretical training. So we are running a series of workshops at the Gresham Centre in London where established composers can inspire girls and young women to unleash their creativity and gain confidence as composers, for example by finding another way to create a score that other performers can understand.'

The first of these sessions took place in November 2016 and was led by Kerry Andrew. A diverse group of girls from across London, all with musical ambitions, learnt about body percussion and rhythms, and wrote a short piece that they performed as an ensemble on the spot. 'It was really, really good fun,' said one participant. 'It was a good way of thinking of different styles of composition, and thinking more outside the box.' Another said it had been inspirational to discover that even if she followed a different career, she could still find time to compose and have music in her life.

Aspirations for the future are to produce a recording and publish an anthology of work by British women composers, including all the five 15 commissions, to provide a useful resource for other choirs. A festival and a competition for young women composers are also on the agenda.

Current composer-in-residence Jessica Curry specialises in writing music for video games, and presents a show about this genre on Classic FM radio. But some of her soundtracks include choral writing, and in 2016 she collaborated with the poet laureate, Carol Ann Duffy, on a sequence of hymns for choir and brass band commemorating ▶

▶ (from top) 'We want to do our bit to train the next generation of women composers' – conductor Dominic Ellis-Peckham; with current composer-in-residence Jessica Curry; (l to r) Kerry Andrew, Dobrinka Tabakova, Ailsa Dixon, and Cheryl Frances-Hoad





◀ Ship figureheads provide a colourful backcloth to the London Oriana Choir's performances in the Sammy Ofer Gallery

◀ the centenary of the Battle of the Somme; it was premiered in Durham Cathedral.

Curry's first work for the Oriana Choir, *Home*, was premiered during their Christmas concerts at St James's Piccadilly, a central London church which is famous for its mission to the homeless, to refugees and to outsiders, reflected in striking and provocative recent art installations on the theme of migrant journeys. *Home* sets a deeply moving text by the Somali-British writer Warsan Shire, depicting the build-up of panic: 'No one leaves home, unless home is the mouth of a shark ... no one puts their children in a boat, unless water is safer than the land.' The piece was performed alongside a wide variety of seasonal pieces, almost all of them by women. Attending a rehearsal in December, I saw and heard for myself how much the members of the London Oriana Choir were enjoying learning this unfamiliar but richly rewarding repertoire.

For Avena, a recent recruit whose previous singing experience includes membership of the Irish Youth Choir, an important aspect of the project is that it has been devised and is so passionately championed by a male musical director. 'Dominic's enthusiasm for the music of these female composers really makes me feel supported, which is a very special experience.' 'I can't imagine us ever going back to programmes that only include music by men, other than single-work concerts,' adds Simon Funnell, a radio producer and orchestra administrator who has been appointed project manager for five15. 'There is no compromise – this is all standing up brilliantly to comparison with anything else in our repertoire. We're commissioning and uncovering great music.' ■

Jessica Curry's second piece for five15, Briefly it enters, and briefly speaks, will be performed alongside Carmina burana at 7.30pm on 16 March 2019, St Clement Danes, Strand, London. The closing date for applications to be the next composer-in-residence is 8 March 2019. www.five15.org

Clare Stevens works as a writer, editor and publicist in the Welsh Marches, where she sings with Hereford Choral Society.



A masterpiece restored

John Maidment is impressed by Harrison & Harrison's restoration of a 1930 Hill, Norman & Beard organ in Adelaide



The foundation stone of St Peter's Cathedral in Adelaide, South Australia, was laid in 1869, a response to the See of Adelaide having been constituted some 22 years earlier. The original design was by the leading English architect William Butterfield (who was also responsible for St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne). However, only the choir, sanctuary and double transepts were erected initially, together with a portion of the nave; the remainder was then redesigned, with a west end clearly modelled on Notre-Dame in Paris (but with spires) and an apsidal lady chapel behind the high altar. The small octagonal tower over the choir transepts is reminiscent of the far larger tower Butterfield designed for Rugby School. Of particular note for those interested in music are the superlative acoustics, with ample resonance for music and, in particular, the organ.

The first organ, by Bishop & Son in 1877, was located in the right choir transept at floor level, with a reversed console, and was said to sound magnificent despite its modest size. (This instrument survives in a suburban Adelaide church.) Indeed, so satisfied were the cathedral authorities with its sound that almost every stop it contained may be found replicated on the present instrument.

The English firm of William Hill & Son and Norman & Beard Ltd established its Australian subsidiary in 1927 after it won the contract for a £32,000 organ at Melbourne Town Hall, the largest concert organ built in the British Empire during the interwar years. The firm set up a branch factory at Clifton Hill, Melbourne, which was directed by Eustace Ingram Jnr (c.1863-1953), an experienced English organ builder.

◀ The organ case was completed in 2018 to Walter Bagot's 1929 design

CHRIS CATANI

St Peter's Cathedral, Adelaide, Australia

HILL, NORMAN & BEARD (1930); HARRISON & HARRISON (2018)

GREAT

Double Open Diapason (A)	16	<i>Tremulant</i>
Open Diapason I	8	<i>Sub Octave</i>
Open Diapason II	8	<i>Unison Off</i>
Claribel	8	<i>Octave</i>
Corno Dolce	8	<i>Swell to Choir</i>
Principal	4	<i>Swell Octave to Choir</i>
Harmonic Flute	4	<i>Solo to Choir</i>
Quint Flute (harmonic)	3	
Fifteenth	2	
Sesquialtera (17.19.22)	III	
Mixture* (19.22.26)	III	
Trumpet	8	
Clarion	4	
<i>Swell Sub Octave to Great</i>		
<i>Swell to Great</i>		
<i>Swell Octave to Great</i>		
<i>Choir Sub Octave to Great</i>		
<i>Choir to Great</i>		
<i>Choir Octave to Great</i>		
<i>Solo Sub Octave to Great</i>		
<i>Solo to Great</i>		
<i>Solo Octave to Great</i>		

SWELL

(73 note windchest)	
Lieblich Bourdon	16
(stopped metal trebles with chimneys)	
Open Diapason	8
(open wood bass)	
Rohr Flöte	8
(stopped metal trebles)	
Viol d'Orchestre	8
Voix Celeste (t.c.)	8
Principal	4
Flute	4
(stopped metal trebles)	
Fifteenth	2
Sesquialtera (12.17.19)	III
Mixture* (15.19.22)	III
Contra Fagotto	16
Cornocean	8
Oboe	8
Clarion	4
<i>Tremulant</i>	
<i>Sub Octave</i>	
<i>Unison Off</i>	
<i>Octave</i>	
<i>Solo to Swell</i>	

CHOIR

(enclosed with Solo)	
Gedeckt	8
Gamba	8
Unda Maris (t.c.) (stopped metal)	8
Salicet	4
Suabe Flute	4
Harmonic Piccolo	2
Clarinet	8
Orchestral Oboe	8

SOLO

(enclosed with Choir, except Tubas)	
Harmonic Flute	8
Violoncello	8
Salicional	8
Harmonic Flute	4
Vox Humana	8
<i>Tremulant</i>	
Tuba (B)	8
Clarion (B)	4
<i>Sub Octave</i>	
<i>Unison Off</i>	
<i>Octave</i>	

PEDAL

Double Open Diapason (C)	32
Open Diapason (C)	16
Contra Bass (A)	16
Bourdon (D)	16
Principal* (E)	8
Bass Flute (D)	8
Violoncello	8
Fifteenth* (E)	4
Contra Trombone (F) (1-12 1989)	32
Trombone (F)	16
Trumpet (F)	8
<i>Great to Pedal</i>	
<i>Swell to Pedal</i>	
<i>Choir to Pedal</i>	
<i>Solo to Pedal</i>	

Great & Pedal Pistons Coupled
Generals on Swell Foot Pistons

* 2018

Pitch: A = 435 @ 19° C

Compass: 61/32

Wind pressures

Pedal flue	178mm (7")
Pedal Trombone	305 mm (12")
Pedal Contra Trombone 1-12	203mm (8")
Choir	102mm (4")
Lower Great (including chorus reeds)	
	178mm (7")
Upper Great	102mm (4")
Back Swell	102mm (4")
Front Swell (including chorus reeds)	203mm (8")
Solo	152mm (6")
Solo Tuba	305mm (12")

◀ The St Peter's organ was partly built in London and partly in Melbourne, and was inaugurated in July 1930. Earlier drawings indicate that it was to be divided in each of the choir transepts, but this was not proceeded with, probably on the grounds of cost. It was therefore placed in the left choir transept, opposite to where the Bishop & Son instrument had been placed, with the console adjacent on a gallery. The organ is a long way from the nave, with the transepts and one bay of the choir in between. To economise on space, it had to be very carefully planned, with the Choir and Solo sharing a common swell box. The Great Organ is placed on two levels: the higher speaks into the Cathedral completely unimpeded, and the lower level is behind the façade. However, there is no problem with tonal egress and the sound erupts

The overall sound is arresting in fine acoustics, with ample weight and strong character

into the building with great vigour. Hill, Norman & Beard had to plan around this less than favourable siting. The secondary (choir) transepts are narrow and enclosed by arches. The organ had to be placed on three levels, with a vertiginous internal ascent to the top. In order for the sound to transmit to the nave, wind pressures for much of the fluework is higher than normal, with the Great and Swell unison and octave Diapasons placed on the reed chests, speaking on seven and eight inches pressure.

The mechanical and tonal style of the organ represents an amalgam of what both the Hill and Norman & Beard firms had been building, but it is the latter firm that provided the most inspiration. The tonal design was worked out with Arthur Nickson, a prominent local organist, and includes a wealth of flute and string tone, as well as bright choruses and powerful but blending reeds. The mechanisms were built to a very high standard, incorporating materials of superlative quality, with slider

windchests, electro-pneumatic slider motors and wind-driven piston action in the console. The fact that the organ has lasted close to 90 years without a major restoration is testimony to its quality – and indeed the skilled maintenance that has taken place over the years.

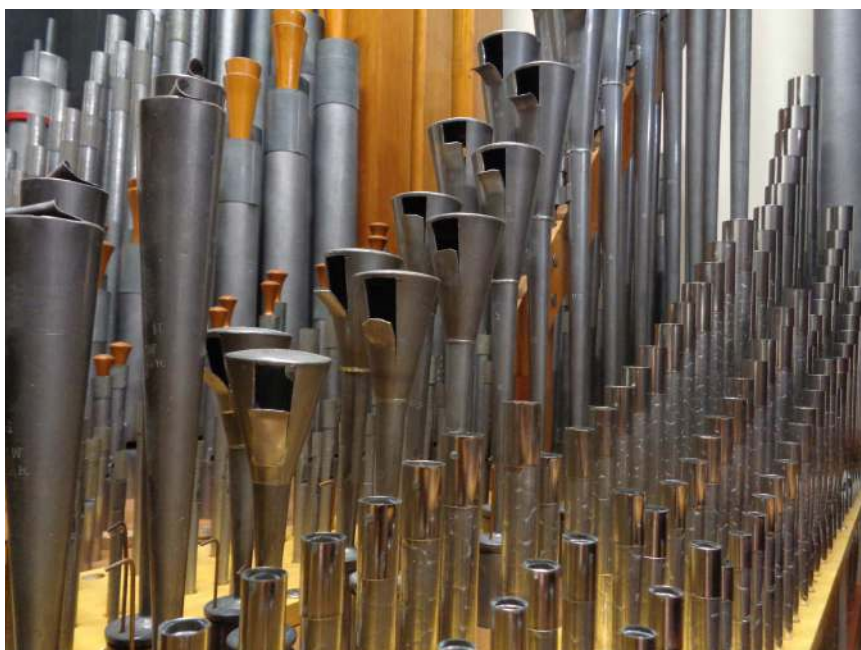
Very few alterations took place to the organ. The original pitch A = 435 was slightly raised around 50 years ago, but the pipework was certainly damaged as a result (and this has been rectified in the recent work, which saw it revert to the original). The original Duplex blowing plant was replaced in 1986 with a Discus unit.

After the instrument virtually collapsed a few years ago, a total renovation could no longer be postponed. The contract was awarded to Harrison & Harrison Ltd of Durham, a firm with extensive expertise of handling instruments built in this style. Most of the instrument was shipped to Durham in mid-2017 and arrived back a little over 12 months later. It was fascinating to observe progress on the firm's website. Many of the original mechanisms were restored. However, the original piston action, driven by book motors and partially adjustable, was changed to solid-state with electro-magnetic action to the drawstops. In some respects it might have been desirable to retain the wind-driven system, as it was still functioning after nine decades and will continue to function, even if releathering is required: it is very reassuring to hear the thump during stop changes at the console. Performers these days, though, require multiple piston memories, a wealth of general pistons and a sequencer, and the upgraded system offers enormous flexibility, as was evident in David Heah's playing at the opening of the organ on Advent Sunday 2018.

The work has included the completion of the organ case, designed by cathedral architect Walter Bagot in April 1929. Clearly influenced by the chancel cases of the near-contemporary Willis organ at Liverpool Cathedral, it includes two projecting towers containing the Great Double down FF# where the central pipes have two adjacent mouths. Harrisons have adapted Bagot's design so that it could be constructed by a CAD process, representing a huge saving in hand labour. Its completion is very welcome and it matches to perfection the other fine



HARRISON & HARRISON



HARRISON & HARRISON

▲ (top) Hooded Great reeds and heavy-pressure flue work; (below) Swell stopped metal flutes, Oboe (with harmonic trebles) and the new Mixture

woodwork in the Cathedral, including the massive reredos.

The HN&B console has been fully refurbished (the original keys and stopknobs are due to replace a temporary installation in late February). The firm's neatly panelled oak stop jambs have been retained and the ivory fittings cleaned. New thumb pistons, based upon the design of the originals, have been added and the original steel composition pedals have been replaced

with H&H brass examples. It is good to see the original voltmeter retained – not that there should be any fluctuations in action current these days.

The tonal design of the organ includes no fewer than nine string registers. One of the builder's specialities, the Corno Dolce, was a Norman & Beard invention – a very quiet, stringy Dulciana. There is also a welcome variety of open, stopped and harmonic flute registers, and the two original Mixtures ▶



▲ The organ viewed from the choir; the console is placed in the gallery to the left

◁ include a prominent seventeenth partial and break back to a very low pitch in the treble. Rather than alter these and revise the composition, a second quint and unison Mixture has been added to the Great and Swell divisions on extensions to the original windchests, a more preferable course of action – these integrate perfectly with the original material. I can recall something similar happening at St Paul's Cathedral, London, where the two Great Willis Tierce Mixtures survive alongside a new Quint Mixture. The major chorus reeds speak with a distinct vowel colour – very different from what the Hill firm was building 50 years earlier.

All of the original 1930 tonal material survives without alteration and the only additions have been the two new Mixtures and a metal Pedal Principal 8 and 4 unit that has been ingeniously accommodated at a lower level and offers enhanced definition to the Pedal line.

The overall sound is arresting in such fine acoustics, with ample weight and strong character. It is quite different from what the HN&B firm's principal competitors – Harrison, Walker and Willis – were producing at the time. The original flue choruses are surmounted by strong Tierce Mixtures, while there is a rich variety of quieter colours – such as the vibrant Swell

strings with sharp-tuned Celeste, and the Choir strings with flat-tuned Unda Maris. The soft reeds, particularly the piquant small-scale Choir Orchestral Oboe and Solo Vox Humana, are comparable with what the firm would have placed in its signature Christie theatre organs. Harrisons' voicing team must be complimented on its revoicing – with new shallots, tongues and boots – of the 12 pipes of the 1989 Giesecke full-length Contra Trombone to produce a dramatic effect in the building, exactly as could have happened in 1930.

The organ excels in its task of liturgical accompaniment and offers a rich flood of sound that greatly supports congregational singing. The powerful fundamental that the organ possesses, amplified by the sonority of the chorus reeds, the soaring Tubas and underpinned by a powerful 32ft reed, is all that could be desired. In terms of the organ repertoire, clearly it is completely at home in English music of the period: Brewer, Cocker, Howells, Stanford and Whitlock sound to perfection here, with all the requisite orchestral colouring. Owing to the excellent acoustics, French music too may be played with conviction – we heard Vierne's *Carillon de Westminster* and Alain's *Litanies* at the inaugural recital.

This is a very rare example of a large interwar organ by the Hill, Norman & Beard firm that remains substantially unaltered. The only comparable examples are at Dunedin Town Hall, in New Zealand (1926), Scotch College, Hawthorn, Victoria (1930 – ex-Presbyterian Assembly Hall, Sydney) and the Chapel of the Royal Hospital School, Holbrook (1933). The firm's major organ of this period, at Melbourne Town Hall, was subsumed into a larger new instrument by the American Schantz firm in 2000. How wonderful, therefore, that the Adelaide organ has been so carefully preserved, and now functions and sounds to perfection. ■

Thanks to Andy Scott, Harrison & Harrison head voicer, for technical information and images to illustrate the article.

John Maidment was the co-founder and chairman of the Organ Historical Trust of Australia. He initiated the production of a series of gazetteers of organs in Australia and has written and advised widely on the subject.

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Freedom in song

With Latvia torn between Germany and the Soviet Union during the second world war, Alberts Jērums made his way into exile, where he combined composing with organising choral festivals. To mark his centenary, Musica Baltica is publishing a new edition of his vocal works. **Leslie East** reports

The centenaries in 2018 of the first declarations of independence of the Baltic States drew attention not only to their political status but also their cultural profile. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania all ran extensive, and sometimes amazing, cultural events in the UK.

These celebrations, though, concealed one unavoidable truth. For the best part of five decades, from 1944, all three countries were forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union. They were not free in any sense we would understand or recognise, and certainly not 'independent'. Cultural development was circumscribed by Soviet dogma and oppression. It is estimated that about 50 per cent of those active in Latvia's cultural life fled to the west after they foresaw the impending terror. At the beginning of 1947, there were 933 Latvian professional performing artists in German refugee camps. One of these was the composer Alberts Jērums.

Born in 1919 in Valga County, Estonia, close to the Latvian northern border, Jērums studied at the conservatoire in Riga from 1939. His composition teacher was Jāzeps Vītols (1863-1948), a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov, a friend of Glazunov, Lyadov and Belyayev, teacher of Stravinsky and composer of the first Latvian symphony, string quartet and piano sonata. On his return to Riga in 1918, Vītols dominated Latvian musical life for 25 years, establishing the Latvian Opera (1918) and Conservatory (1919) and leading these for considerable periods. Even during the Nazi occupation (1941-44) he retained his eminence; but realising that the returning Soviet regime would no longer tolerate his independence, he fled to Germany, ending his life in exile and deep depression.

Vītols's teaching was traditional, but he recognised Jērums's special talent. He readily admitted that he didn't understand Jērums's music. On hearing his orchestral *Scherzo* in 1942, Vītols declared, 'You are mad!' Nevertheless, he recognised the formal logic and technical assurance of Jērums's

works and that he was a truly gifted follower of a new musical path.

As a young man, like many of his compatriots Jērums was drafted illegally into the German army. In the Nazi retreat from the renewed Soviet invasion he realised that his future in a Soviet Latvia would be at least uncomfortable, and at worst disastrous and life-threatening. Leaving behind a wife – the actress Velta Krūze, who urged Jērums for his own safety not to return to Latvia – and a young daughter, Inga, he found his way to Detmold, Germany, where he spent two years in a displaced persons camp.

Before 1945 he had written only three choral works. *Sirds kapi* ('Graves of the heart', 1939) was a student work and his first completed composition, but even in this we can hear essential elements of his musical style that remained constant throughout his life. The poem, by the distinguished Latvian poet and playwright

◀ 'A truly gifted follower of a new musical path': Alberts Jērums in London in 1953

▼ Ex. 1: *Sirds kapi* ('Graves of the heart'), Jērums's first completed composition, bears the essential elements of his musical style

Ex. 1

REPRODUCED WITH THE PERMISSION OF JĀVĀJĒRUMA GRĒMĒKA

REPRODUCED WITH THE PERMISSION OF JĀNA JĒRUMA-GRINBERGA



▲ Jērums's cantata *Neraudi, māsiņa* ('Weep not, dear sister') was inspired by personal circumstances and makes use of Latvian folksong. It opens with a bleak organ passage (Ex.2, left), but the mood turns to one of hope for reconciliation in the concluding section (Ex.3, right)

◀ Rainis (Jānis Pliekšāns), is mysterious, evocative, almost impossible to express in English. Rainis was a key figure in the development and emergence of the Latvian nation. Exiled in Switzerland after the 1905 revolution, he was only able to return to Latvia in 1920, becoming a member of parliament and holding several key political positions until his death in 1929.

Jērums's setting establishes two features that were to permeate his compositions. The first is his uncanny ability to capture the mood of a poem; the other is the essential element of his musical language that marks out his distinctive voice. A completely

REPRODUCED WITH THE PERMISSION OF JĀNA JĒRUMA-GRINBERGA



Dissonance and chromaticism are at the heart of the language. Yet Jērums was a fine judge of singers' capabilities

natural contrapuntal idiom is allied to a melodic and harmonic language strongly flavoured by chromatic and quartal intervals. Throughout his output Jērums never abandons diatonic melody or triadic harmony, but these elements are naturally integrated with his more radical stylistic traits [Ex.1].

Only two further mixed choir songs survive from the 1940s. *Lauztais ozols* ('The broken oak') was begun in June 1942 but only completed in exile, in Germany in 1947. The poem, by Anna Brigadere, could be construed as a metaphor for the Latvian nation, subdued by Nazi and Soviet invasions. The style is recognisably similar to *Sirds kapi* but has moved on already to encompass more elaborate

textures, more intense harmonies and a greater rhythmic flexibility.

Then, in 1946, in the Detmold displaced persons camp, Jērums produced his first folksong setting. It is difficult to convey to a non-Latvian audience the overwhelming significance of *Ej, saulīte, drīz pie Dieva!* ('Sun set early – Go to God!'). This song must have been sung thousands of times in Latvian song festivals and choir concerts since its first performance on 27 June 1948 at a Latvian Song Festival held in Fischbachau, Bavaria, then in the American-occupied zone in Germany. The folksong was sung by serf workers in the days when they had to work long hours for their feudal masters. Their plea is for the sun to set early and go to God, so that the serfs may get an evening of rest. Jērums sets this in some ways conventionally but encases it in a deeply atmospheric environment with a very still, wordless opening and heartrending wordless cries punctuating the ends of the first two verses.

In *Ej, saulīte, drīz pie Dieva!* we find the essence of Jērums's approach to Latvian folksong that was to permeate his choral and solo song settings. Here, the original song is given not just fresh harmony but also a context that defines and adds to its essential character. Later, Latvian folksong would permeate his compositions in different ways. One way was to throw it into relief against an almost unconnected accompaniment, often treating it contrapuntally with the avoidance of conventional triadic harmony. Another was to lay the original song over fascinating, intricate but complementary harmonisations, such as in his settings of *Ziedi, ziedi, rudzu vārpa*

(‘Bloom, bloom ears of rye’, 1969), *Māšinas atvadu deja* (‘A sister’s farewell dance’, 1977) and *Šūpo mani, māmuliņa* (‘Cradle me, mother dear’, 1975-76?).

By 1948, many displaced exiles were beginning to emigrate – to the US, Canada, Australia and Britain. Jērums chose to move to London. Typically, within days of arriving, he had gathered together many of his fellow exiles and formed the London Latvian Choir. His ambition did not stop there. He was one of the prime movers behind the first English Latvian Song Festival held in London and Leeds in 1949. Such was the success of this that a second festival followed in Leicester in 1950, and by 1951, 20 Latvian choirs from all over England came together in the Royal Albert Hall for the third event. Jērums went on to organise most of the festivals in the UK until his death in 1978. He also initiated European Latvian Song Festivals in Hamburg (1964), Hanover (1968), Cologne (1973) and London (1977). His ultimate dream he never lived to see but in 1979, on the Swedish island of Gotland, within sight of Soviet Latvia, Latvians from all over the free world gathered together in a provocative and emotional event that was dedicated to his memory.

Organising festivals and earning a living for himself, his second wife, Lauma, and his second daughter, Jāna, meant that composition was often neglected. But he still managed to produce some outstanding original works, often written for Latvian choirs in different parts of the world. There were a further 13 mixed choir songs and six for female choir (including the above-mentioned *Ziedi, ziedi, rudzu vārpa*). The fine Latvian tradition of male voice choirs, quartets and octets continued in exile, and from his pen ten works for male choirs or groups emerged between 1945 and 1973. Contemporary music concerts in the festivals allowed him to develop his instrumental writing as well as a significant series of solo songs.

Yet it was his final work that brought together many of the most distinctive features of his music. By 1977 Jērums had conceived the idea of a cantata that had huge significance for his personal circumstances. His daughter Inga he had not seen since 1944. His second daughter Jāna had never met her half-sister (and only did so at their father’s funeral when Inga was allowed to travel to London by the Soviet authorities). Drawing together folk texts and melodies with original poems by Velta Sņikere and Indra Gubiņa, Jērums imagined a work in which the separation of two sisters became a parable for a plea for Latvian freedom. The two poets provided him with a text in which it is recognised that the seas that divide the sisters (and thus metaphorically the exiled and subjugated Latvian peoples) cannot be bridged easily, but it is through song and singing that they can be united.

The bleak organ opening of *Neraudi, māšiņa* (‘Weep not, dear sister’) [Ex.2] – full of his harmonic and melodic fingerprints – gives way to the children’s choir singing a Latvian folksong accompanied by the traditional zither, the kokle: ‘The cuckoo calls, the nightingale sings, our sister weeps in a foreign land.’ Taken up by choir and organ, this folksong merges with an evocation of the sea – the choir’s wordless soundscape introducing the two solo voices for the first time. The music of this central section of the cantata is challenging for soloists, choir and organist; it makes no concessions to the amateur choristers who premiered it. Dissonance and chromaticism are at the heart of the language. Yet Jērums was a fine judge of singers’ capabilities. Once learnt, his vocal parts stick in the mind and stay gratefully in the voice.

As Latvian freedom is evoked through the power of song, so another folksong provides the cantata’s climax: ‘Sing sister, towards me. I will rejoice back to you,’ and ‘May the wind carry our voice into our father’s homestead.’ A joyous four-part contrapuntal choral texture, firmly grounded in E major, captures the welcome optimism of the folksong. After its brief reflective recollection by the children and kokles, the choir and organ exult in this vision of reconciliation and reunion, the ‘Rotā!’ refrain, from traditional Latvian ceremonies, propelling the work to a triumphant conclusion with all seven notes of the diatonic scale reverberating in the final chords [Ex.3].

While never heard in performance by its composer, *Neraudi, māšiņa* became a fitting tribute to Jērums’s originality as a composer, and his legacy as a musician and Latvian patriot. ■

The cantata Neraudi, māšiņa will be published for the first time in March 2019 by Musica Baltica. Editions of Jērums’s choir songs and solo songs will follow.

Leslie East is chair of abcd, co-conductor of the London Latvian Choir, and a writer on and editor of music by Latvian composers.

▼ The London Latvian Choir singing in its 60th anniversary concert in 2008, with Leslie East conducting and the choir’s chief conductor Lilija Zobens on the far left



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M. FERNANDA SEQUEIRA

Time travel

The geographical location of the Azores has given the archipelago a very particular organ heritage built up over five centuries, reflecting influences from Spain, Italy, and above all Portugal, writes **Isabel Albergaria Sousa**

The Azores islands are an autonomous region of Portugal, located in the North Atlantic, 1,600 kilometres from Lisbon. Made up of nine islands of volcanic origin and of varying dimensions, they have about 250,000 inhabitants. A rich organ heritage of 56 instruments is spread across all the islands (with the exception of the smallest, Corvo). Only three of them are to be found in spaces that are not of a religious nature, demonstrating the supremacy in the islands of the Catholic Church, and of religious

orders such as the Franciscans. The movement of priests and other religious persons between the Azores and the mainland led to the installation of organs in the archipelago over the course of time. The importance of the Azores in the panorama of organs in Portugal lies in the significant number of historical instruments that have survived to this day, particularly those of Portuguese construction from the late 18th and 19th centuries, many of them virtually intact and of indisputable artistic value.

▲ One example of the instrumental treasures to be found in the Azores: the organ of the Parish Church of São José (Ponta Delgada, on the island of São Miguel), built by Joaquim António Peres Fontanes in 1797

▷

PEDRO GOMES



◀ Dating back to the 16th century, with the founding of the diocese of Angra in 1534, the history of the organ in the Azores is made up of various phases, with instruments of different conceptions, reflecting the sound aesthetic and the social and religious dimension of each period. From the 16th century up to the 1780s, only two organs have survived. The oldest has eight complete stops and is to be found in the Church of Santo António (island of Pico), having been acquired by a Franciscan Convent. Undated and with no indication as to the builder, its characteristics match those of the Italian school of the early 18th century. The second oldest is preserved at the Church of Guadalupe (island of Graciosa), and was built in 1775 by the Portuguese Leandro José da Cunha, with three half stops and four complete stops. Both are small instruments, with a single keyboard, short octave, and extensions of 45 and 47 notes respectively.

For a hundred years between 1780 and 1880, the Azores enjoyed a period of great economic prosperity, thanks to the cultivation of oranges and their export, principally to England. Profits from the orange trade increased the purchasing power of

M. FERNANDA SEQUEIRA





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patrons of the churches, convents, charitable houses and confraternities, resulting in the acquisition of innumerable organs, some of them being of considerable size and richly decorated.

Twenty organs have survived from the period 1788-1831, built in Lisbon by the two most eminent builders active in Portugal in the late 18th and early 19th centuries: Joaquim António Peres Fontanes (1750-1818) and António Xavier Machado e Cerveira (1756-1828), responsible for the set of six organs at the Basilica of the Mafra National Palace. These

of the two hands (such as the *flautado* or diapason/principal family), in which the lowest pipe of the left hand doesn't necessarily define the pitch of the remaining stops. Their sound structures are made up of single, composite, reed and solo stops, particularly important being the *Corneta*, the *Flauta* and the *Voz humana*; as in Italy, this last is a flue stop. But the principal innovation of the Portuguese organ is the on/off mechanism for the *cheios* (the range of upper flues and mixtures), which permits a rapid alternation between two distinct sound levels, like *forte* and

◀▲ (opposite, top) The 1797 Fontanes organ in the Parish Church of São José in Ponta Delgada is the largest historical Portuguese organ in the Azores; (opposite, below) the console; (above, from left) pulley bellows and stop jacks

The 1797 Peres Fontanes organ in the Parish Church of São José is built in an imposing, decorative idiom, in harmony with the rich architectural structure of the church

organs from Lisbon are of particular importance in being archetypical of late 18th-century Portuguese organ building, as distinct from the Spanish tradition – to which they were always related – through the introduction of new technical and sound resources, which came about in response to the Italian influence that dominated 18th-century music in Portugal, especially sacred music. As well as having horizontal reeds in the façade, split keyboards between c1 and c1#, and split registers (inherited from Spanish organ building), the organs by Peres Fontanes and Machado e Cerveira abandon the short octave, and usually have an asymmetry between the bass stops

piano (tutti and soloist in a orchestral context), on a single keyboard, through the existence of a main windchest and a secondary one – consequently known as the '*cheios* windchest'. So the organist can prepare registration in advance and can action the pedal while playing, without having to take hands off the keyboard.

The organ of the Parish Church of São José, in Ponta Delgada (island of São Miguel), is the largest historical Portuguese organ in the Azores. It is also the most authoritative and best preserved of the Peres Fontanes instruments. Built in 1797, it has 24 stops (22 half-stops and 2 complete stops), a single manual ▶

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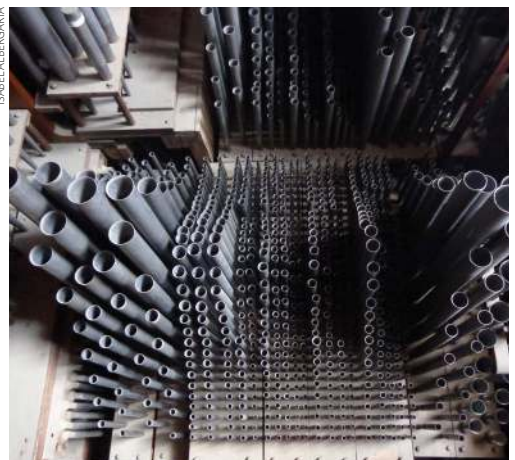
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ISABEL ALBERGARIA



◀ (C-d3, 51 notes) and a small chromatic pedalboard of 12 pull-downs coupled to the lowest octave of the keyboard (the only example among the Azores organs), as well as an on/off *cheios* pedal and another for the drum effect. In this instrument there is sound symmetry between the two parts of the keyboard, as well as the beauty and refinement of the timbre, particularly of the *Flauta*, *Voz humana* and *Corneta V*, clearly intended for solo use, but also of the reed stops and the *Mistura V*. In visual terms, it is an organ built in an imposing, decorative idiom, in harmony with the rich architectural structure of the church.

Another important example of Portuguese organ building is located in the Church of São Sebastião, the main church in Ponta Delgada. It is one of the last organs built by Machado e Cerveira, in 1828 (Opus 102), with 21 half-stops and one keyboard (C-g3, 56 notes). One of its peculiarities is the echo stops (*Flauta* and *Clarim de eco*) – the only example in the Azores – which function as solo stops. It also has an on/off *cheios* pedal and drum pedal, as well as an on/off pedal for the echo stops. All of the pipes on the façade are gilt, something that is not found in organs by the same builder on the mainland.

From 1834, as the new political Liberal regime became established and closed down religious orders, organ building and the composition of sacred music in Portugal became more erratic. Between 1848 and 1892 at least another 20 organs were produced in the Azores, following the models of Peres Fontanes and Machado e Cerveira, repeating the same patterns of production, such as the on/off *cheios* pedal function. These organs were mostly designed by builders who were either local or resident in the Azores, most notably Joaquim Silvestre Serrão (1801-77) and João Nicolau Ferreira (1820-78). Some of the organs built in the second half of the 19th century reused metal pipes from older instruments and have ranks of wooden pipes, like the *Flauta*; and some organs were made entirely of wooden pipes. The *Flauta* stop on the organ at the Church of São Pedro, in Ponta Delgada, built by Ferreira under the supervision of Serrão in 1858 (Opus 2), demonstrates considerable artistic skill.

In a context in which organs of Portuguese conception predominate, an unattributed organ in the French style is particularly striking. Probably from the beginning of the 20th century, with a single keyboard, ▶



M. FERNANDA SEQUEIRA



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◀ (this page and opposite) The organ of the Church of São Sebastião, Ponta Delgada (S. Miguel), including chamade reeds, console detail, the pedals, and interior pipework. It is one of the last instruments built by the Portuguese António Xavier Machado e Cerveira (Opus 102, 1828), and the echo stops *Flauta* and *Clarim de eco* are the only examples in the Azores. All the pipes on the façade are gilt, something that is not found in organs by the same builder on the mainland

M. FERNANDA SEQUEIRA



▲ (above and opposite) The influence of 19th-century German organ building can be seen in the organ of the Church of Nossa Senhora do Rosário, built in 1886 by the German firm Eberhard Friedrich Walcker & Cie, Opus 481 (Lagoa, on the island of S. Miguel). The instrument retains its original pipework and is unusual in the console being placed at the side

▲ Flauta pipework of the organ at the Church of São Pedro, from 1858 by local builder João Nicolau Ferreira under the supervision of Silvestre Serrão, Opus 2 (Ponta Delgada, island of S. Miguel)

◀ it is housed in the Church of Nossa Senhora da Graça (Praia do Almoxarife), on the island of Faial.

Also noteworthy is the organ in the Church of Nossa Senhora do Rosário (Lagoa), on the island of São Miguel. Built in 1886 by the German firm Eberhard Friedrich Walcker & Cie (Opus 481), and commissioned by a Jewish trader settled in the city of Ponta Delgada, it is typical of the firm's instruments at this period. It possesses a robust mass of sound, with a single manual (C-f3, 54 notes) and pedal-board (C-d1, 27 notes): four 8ft stops on the manual, one 4ft and a three-rank mixture, as well as octave coupler. This organ is a valuable example of romantic German organ building at the end of 19th century, preserving the original pipework and mechanism. Furthermore, it is unusual in having the console placed at the side of the instrument. Aesthetically, it is a model of sobriety.

Between 1888 and 1907 the Azores received a new influx of organs by Manuel Serpa da Silva, an Azorean born on the island of Faial who emigrated to the US, returning in the 1880s. The organs built by Serpa da Silva (about a dozen) bring together Iberian, French and American features. They generally have one manual (exceptionally two), and some have a pedal-board and harmonium incorporated. Some of them have a swell pedal, a novelty in the Azores in the closing years of the 19th century. The material for these organs, such as the wood and metal pieces, originates in the US.

From the time of Serpa da Silva up to the present, the Azores have received five more organs, only two being for use in liturgical spaces. Three were built between 1993 and 2010 by Portuguese builder Dinarte Machado, including the largest organ in the archipelago, situated in the Cathedral of the

M. FERNANDA SEQUEIRA



Santíssimo Salvador, in Angra do Heroísmo (island of Terceira), with three manuals and pedalboard.

Since the 1980s the Regional Government of the Azores has been investing in the recovery of the legacy of organs, through an extensive programme of restoration. Roughly 30 organs have been restored, mostly under the direction of Dinarte Machado. This revitalisation of organs has been accompanied by organ teaching in the region's three principal cities (Ponta Delgada, Angra do Heroísmo and Horta) and by the programming of regular concerts. ■

Isabel Albergaria Sousa has a PhD in Musicology from Universidade Nova de Lisboa, and is an organist and organ teacher on the island of São Miguel, Azores.

ISABEL ALBERGARIA





MENTORS IN MUSIC

By Andrew Macintosh, Director, RCO Scotland and Northern Ireland

Forging a career in music has never been simple. Whether as a performer, teacher, administrator or any other role, there is an apparently endless and often bewildering sequence of options to consider, choices to make, and challenges to overcome.

The truth is that almost no one succeeds on their own. Most of us who are privileged enough to work in music can point to at least one person – and usually more – who helped, influenced and guided us along the way.

Some of these people were our teachers – those brilliant, inspiring and endlessly patient souls who taught us the art and practices of our trade. Without them, we wouldn't even be musicians.

But others have then helped us take those skills and turn them into a career. Each supported us in different but vital ways: by taking us under their wing; by counselling us at key moments; and by sharing their experiences as successful professionals to help us achieve our own potential.

These were our mentors.

Of course the word 'mentor' captures a wide range of relationships. At one end of the spectrum there is the role model, someone we might never even meet in person but whom we admire, study and perhaps even seek to emulate in our own career path. Today the internet provides access to this kind of information and inspiration like never before, via websites, social media and interviews for example.

But at a deeper level there is the personal engagement with someone to whom we can speak, ask questions, and turn to for advice. How on earth does one go about finding an appropriate mentor in that capacity?

A recurrent theme in the College's 2015/2016 consultation exercise was that of support with career issues for organists and choral directors. The RCO's successful partnership with the ISM addresses this need in terms of professional protection and legal advice, but there was also the question of how to access informal, sympathetic and confidential support when, for example, dealing with a particularly knotty issue, or when in need of fresh ideas.

We thought carefully about how best to provide such additional support, and the result was the RCO Mentoring Programme, introduced in 2018.

The programme is designed to complement the RCO's existing educational and professional support services. At the time of writing, more than 20 mentors from a broad range of professional backgrounds have volunteered to provide support in over 30 areas of professional activity. Some of these areas concern careers advice – from general guidance through to the specifics of business planning, risk management and working in Higher Education, schools or cathedrals. Others relate to practical and performance matters, from improvisation and continuo

or ensemble playing to repertoire advice and performance psychology.

Mentoring sessions can take many forms; they might be discussions or perhaps an opportunity to see a mentor at work. The sessions are certainly not intended as a replacement for teaching: indeed, a possible outcome of a mentoring discussion might be advice on how best to access suitable teaching, or other learning opportunities.

Neither is the RCO programme one of the highly structured, so-called 'high impact', mentoring programmes to be found in business and in some educational institutions. This is very much about identifying potential mentors and making initial introductions. The College simply puts members in touch with a suitable mentor in an arrangement that makes one initial hour of mentoring support per year freely available to all College members over the age of 18.

Once the initial introduction is made, mentors and mentees can then agree between them when and how the support will be delivered and, in addition to one-to-one meetings, some mentors are willing to provide support via the telephone and/or video conference. If both mentee and mentor agree that additional time – beyond the initial hour – would be beneficial, further sessions may be arranged on a basis agreed by the mentor and mentee together.

Naturally the subject and nature of any advice offered will remain confidential between the mentor and the mentee, and the College will only retain such information as is necessary for the running of the programme – i.e. the names of those involved, together with the date(s) and duration(s) of the consultation(s). Mentors and mentees will be invited to provide feedback to the College on the conduct of the session(s), and such information will be retained and processed in an anonymised form for quality assurance purposes only.

We believe that the RCO Mentoring Programme will prove an invaluable addition to the ever-growing portfolio of services we offer organists and choral directors. By making these introductions and sparking these important relationships, we hope we can help a whole new generation of careers in music flourish and fly.

You can read more about the RCO and its professional support services at www.rco.org.uk/for-every-organist. College members should sign into the Members' Area to find out how to engage with the Mentoring Programme.



RECITAL ROUND-UP

SHORT AND SWEET

A new venture at Hereford Cathedral presents a monthly 'half-length' organ recital. Assistant director of music Peter Dyke says: 'We're calling it "Afternoon Music" (with an eye on Buxtehude's famous *Abendmusiken* at St Mary's, Lübeck). It is relatively relaxing listening from 3.05-3.30pm. We hope to find a way to attract new audiences, who might not be willing, or free, to come to a full-length lunchtime concert.' 'Afternoon Music' recitals are on Saturdays, and are free of charge.

CELEBRATING DEWI SANT

Oliver Hancock's recital at St Mary's, Warwick, on 1 March has a Welsh flavour for St David's Day, with works by Mathias (*Recessional*, op.94 no.4), Vaughan Williams ('Rhosymedre'), Kenneth Leighton (Fantasy on 'St Columba (Erin)'), and Four Preludes on Welsh hymn tunes: 'Aberystwyth' (Alan Rees), 'Hyfrydol' (Betty Roe), 'Cwm Rhondda' (Jason Shute) and 'Llanfair' (Andrew Wright). Also in the programme are J.S. Bach's Fantasia & Fugue in G minor (BWV 542) and Vienne's Final from Symphony no.1.

Hancock told *C&O*: 'As organ scholar at Jesus College, Oxford ("the Welsh College"), I used to enjoy directing Choral Evensong entirely in Welsh every St David's Day. Tackling psalms in Welsh was quite an experience, and balancing north and south Welsh pronunciation a real lesson in diplomacy...'

Hancock's programme draws out some special colours from St Mary's three-manual west end organ (Nicholson & Co, 1980) – 'notably our tremendous Trompeta Real in the Prelude on "Llanfair" ("Hail the day that sees him rise")', our bold Great Diapason in various solo lines (including "Rhosymedre"), and bright, vibrant, "Continental-style" full chorus in the Bach, plus some beautiful and delicate Positive flutes in "Hyfrydol" and at the start of the Leighton.'



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Alton, St Lawrence at 8pm

Gordon Stewart (5 Mar), David Dunnett (2 Apr) 01420 543628

Birmingham Symphony Hall at 1pm

Thomas Trotter (8 Apr) 0121 780 3333

Birmingham Town Hall at 1pm

Thomas Trotter (25 Mar, 29 Apr) 0121 780 3333

Brecon Cathedral at 7pm

Stephen Power & Jon Pilgrim (3 Apr) 01874 624837

Bristol, Wesley's Chapel at 1.30pm

Jean Routley (8 Mar) 0117 926740

Chelmsford Cathedral at 12.30pm

David Price (1 Mar) 01245 294484

Chester Cathedral at 1.10pm

Andrew Wyatt (7 Mar, 4 Apr), Alex Berry (14 Mar), Philip Rushforth (21 Mar, 18, 25 Apr), Anthony Gritten (28 Mar), Graham Eccles (11 Apr) 01244 500974

Chichester Cathedral at 1.10pm

Tomek Pieczora (12 Mar) 01243 812488

Cranleigh School at 12.45pm

Philip Scriven (5 Mar) 01483 542009

Dursley, St James-the-Great at 11am

Adam Parrish (27 Apr) 01453 549280

Edgware, St Alphage, Burnt Oak at 7.30pm

Jane Watts (2 Mar), Samuel Austin (6 Apr) 020 8952 4611

Edinburgh, McEwan Hall at 1.10pm

Mark Brafield (22 Mar) 0131 651 4336

Edinburgh, Reid Concert Hall at 1.10pm

Simon Leach (1 Mar) 0131 651 4336

Edinburgh, Usher Hall at 1.10pm

John Kitchen (8, 15, 29 Apr) 0131 228 1155

Edinburgh, St Giles' Cathedral at 6pm

Michael Harris (3 Mar), Stephen Hamilton (7 Apr), Paul Stubbings (21 Apr) 0131 226 0674

Farnham, St Andrew's at 1.10pm

Jonathan Holl (9 Apr) 01252 715412

Hereford Cathedral at 3.05pm*

Peter Dyke (9 Mar, 13 Apr; 1.15pm, 22 Apr) 01432 374238

Kendal Parish Church at 12.30pm

Ian Hare (8 Mar) 017684 83886

Kidderminster Town Hall at 1.10pm

James Lancelot (11 Apr) 01562 744333

Leeds Town Hall at 1.05pm

Thomas Trotter (4 Mar), Nigel Ogden (18 Mar), Darius Battiwalla (25 Mar) 0113 378 6600

Liverpool Cathedral at 11.15am

Ian Tracey (22 Apr) 0151 708 8471

Liverpool, St George's Hall at 12.45pm

Ian Tracey (19 Mar, 16 Apr) 0151708 8471

London E1, Christ Church

Spitalfields at 7.30pm
Gerard Brooks (15 Apr) 020 7654 3089

London EC3, St Michael's Cornhill at 1pm

Samuel Ali (4 Mar), Roger Judd (11 Mar), Istvan Ella (18 Mar), Rashaan Allwood (25 Mar), Seb Gillot (1 Apr), Alexander Berry (8 Apr), Benjamin Newlove (15 Apr), Jonathan Rennert (29 Apr) 07799 641699

London EC4, St Dunstan-in-the-West at 1.15pm

Martin Ellis (8 Mar) 020 7405 1929

London EC4, St Paul's Cathedral at 4.45pm*

Alexander Binns & Dora Chatzigeorgiou (3 Mar), Richard

Cook (10 Mar), Mark Brafield (17 Mar), Alberto Brigandi (24 Mar), William Fox (6pm, 7 Apr), Andrzej Malitowski (14 Apr), James Orford (21 Apr) 020 7651 0898

London EC4, St Stephen Walbrook at 12.30pm

Martin Ellis (1 Mar) 020 7626 9000

London N1, St John the Evangelist,

Duncan Terrace at 7.30pm

Thomas Trotter (27 Apr) 020 7226 1218

London SE1, Royal Festival Hall at 7.30pm

Wayne Marshall (29 Apr) 0844 875 0073

London SE1, Southwark Cathedral at 1.10pm

Andrew Millington (4 Mar), Stephen Disley (11 Mar), TBC (18 Mar), Peter Wright (1 Apr), Martin Ellis (8 Apr), Harrison Cole (29 Apr) 020 7367 6700

London SW1, Methodist Central Hall at 3pm

Jeremiah Stephenson (17 Mar), Eleni Keventsidou & Stelios Chatziiosifidis (vn) (28 Apr) 020 7377 2440

London SW1, Westminster Abbey at 5.45pm

Sundays 020 7222 5152

London W1, St George's, Hanover Square at 1.10pm

Loreto Aramendi (5 Mar), Rashaan Allwood (19 Mar), Matthew Jorysz (2 Apr), Domenico Gioffrè (16 Apr), Andrew Benson-Wilson (30 Apr) 020 7629 0874

London W1, Grosvenor Chapel at 1.10pm

James Johnstone (12 Mar), Richard Hobson (26 Mar), Jeremiah Stephenson (23 Apr) 020 7499 1684

London WC2, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church at 4pm

Simon Gledhill (30 Mar), Eleni Keventsidou & Stelios Chatziiosifidis (vn) (27 Apr) 01953 688393

Norwich Cathedral at 1.10pm*

Alex Little (7 Mar), George Inscoe (11am, 22 Apr) 01603 218300

Oxford Town Hall at 12 noon

Rashaan Allwood (27 Mar), Anthony Hammond (24 Apr) 01865 252195

Reading Town Hall at 1pm

William McVicker (25 Mar) 0118 960 6060

Rochdale Town Hall at 12 noon

Jeff Ramsdale (9 Mar) 01706 343163

St Albans Cathedral at 12.30pm*

Loreto Aramendi (20 Mar), Tom Winpenny (3pm, 14 Apr), Marko Sever (17 Apr) 01727 860780

St Albans, St Peter's at 5.30pm

Margaret Phillips (13 Apr) 01727 844765

St Albans, St Saviour's at 5.30pm

Edward Higginbottom (16 Mar) 01727 844765

Taunton, St James at 2pm

Martin Ellis (23 Mar) 01823 272931

Warwick, St Mary's at 1.15pm

Oliver Hancock (1 Mar), Mark Swinton (5 Apr) 01926 403940 ext.3

Wells Cathedral at 1.05pm

Harrison Cole (14 Mar), Henrik Bo Hansen (11 Apr), Matthew Owens (25 Apr) 01749 674483

Worcester Cathedral at 12.15pm

James Lancelot (7 Mar) 01905 732916

For fuller listings, visit www.choirandorgan.com

* unless otherwise stated

While every effort is made to provide correct information, readers are strongly advised to telephone the numbers given to confirm details before attending.

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CHOIR & ORGAN NEXT ISSUE MAY/JUNE 2019

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C.B. FISK

A new II/22 organ for a cathedral in Cincinnati.

DA VINCI WITHOUT THE CODE

Cecilia McDowall's new Requiem includes texts by Leonardo.

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MÅRTEN JANSSON

Saint Louis Chamber Chorus's composer-in-residence.

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Who pays for the upkeep of organs?

Plus...

News and previews, specialist reviews, and readers' offers.

ON RELEASE

NEW DISCS COMING OUT IN... MARCH AND APRIL 2019

COURTESY COLM CAREY



Recordings of William Byrd's **Great Service** are not unknown; but a new CD by the Odyssean Ensemble under its director Colm Carey (pictured) throws a new light on the work that was described as 'the finest unaccompanied setting of the Service in the entire repertory of English church music' on its discovery in the Durham Partbooks in 1922.

Unpublished during the composer's lifetime, the work is on a grand scale, with Byrd weaving the ten voices into a rich texture to create a post-Reformation masterpiece.

This new release is unusual in adding the use of the St Teilo organ, a reconstructed

Tudor instrument played here as it is thought Byrd may have intended: with the bass line an octave lower than is usually the case, transforming the music's sonic qualities and enhancing the texture when the 10ft stop is used.

The music is placed in its historical context by readings, performed by David Suchet, from two now defunct liturgies that were part of the Book of Common Prayer: one for the Accession of James I to the throne, and the other for 'Deliverance' from the Gunpowder Plot. Three contemporaneous motets complete the programme. The CD is released by Linn Records [CKD 608] on 29 March.

In 2013, the funeral of Sir John Tavener was held in Winchester Cathedral. The composer had close associations with the Cathedral, so it is appropriate that its musicians should record a collection of the composer's works. **Angels** – a concept that inspired the composer – presents some well-known sacred works, including *Song for Athene*, *The Lamb*, and five anthems from *The Veil of the Temple* alongside works commissioned by Winchester Cathedral Choir: *God is with us*, *Love bade me welcome*, and *As one who has slept*. *Angels* [Hyperion CDA 68255] is due for release in April.

With the news of Jean Guillou's death, it is particularly warming to see that the first volume of his organ works has been recorded by Zuzanna Ferjencikova on the Stalhuth/Jann organ in St Martin, Dudelange in Luxemburg. Guillou himself played this organ, and the 2019 International Organ Competition Dudelange includes one of the composer's works in the final round. **Jean Guillou: Organ Works vol.1** will be released on the MDG label [MDG 906 2089-6] ■

CHORAL CDS

J.S. Bach: Cantatas nos. 106 & 182
Amici Voices
Hyperion CDA 68275

Byrd: The Great Service
David Suchet (spkr), Odyssean Ensemble/Carey
Linn Records CKD 608

Buxtehude: Membra Jesu Nostri
Choir of Trinity Hall, Cambridge,
Orpheus Britannicus/Arthur
Resonus RES 10238

Elgar: Caractacus
Sols, Opera North, Huddersfield
Choral Society/Brabbins
Hyperion CDA 68254

Gabriel Jackson: The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ
Sols, Choir of Merton College,
Oxford, Oxford Sinfonia/Nicholas
Delphian DCD 34222

Music to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Barbara Strozzi
Fieri Consort, Toby Carr (baroque
gtr), Aileen Harp (baroque hp),

Harry Buckoke (viola da gamba)
Fieri Records FIER 003

Kenneth Leighton and Frank Martin: Masses for Double Choir
Choir of King's College London,
James Orford (org)/Fort
Delphian DCD 34211

Perpetual Twilight
Choral Scholars of University
College Dublin/Earley
Signum Classics SIGCD 558

Songs of Renewal
Elizabeth Cragg (s), Bath Camerata,
Huw Watkins (pno)/Goodson
Somm SOMMCD 0195

John Tavener: Angels
Winchester Cathedral Choir,
George Castle (org)/Lumsden
Hyperion CDA 68255

ORGAN CDS

Buxtehude: Early Organ Works (Codex E.B. 1688)
Harald Vogel, organs in Torrlösa,
Helsingør, Pilsun, Roskilde,

Damp, Hamburg, Norden, Lübeck;
Thomas Fritsch (viol da gamba)
MDG 314 2092-2

Jean Guillou: Organ Works vol.1
Zuzanna Ferjencikova,
Stalhuth/Jann organ,
St Martin, Dudelange
(Luxemburg)
MDG 906 2089-6

Mendelssohn: Transcriptions for Organ
Christoph Schoener,
St Michaelis, Hamburg
MDG 949 2096-6

Le Poisson Magique: Organ Works by John McCabe
Tom Winpenny, Harrison
organ, St Albans Cathedral
Resonus RES 10144

Matthias Weckmann: Organ Works
Hilger Kespohl, Arp
Schnitger organ,
St Pankratius, Neuenfelde
MDG 906 2109-6



REVIEWS

Rating: ★★★★★ Highly recommended ★★★★★ Very good ★★★ Good ★★ Average ★ Poor

STAR REVIEW



ALL THE HOST OF HEAVEN: EŠENVALDS, DURUFLÉ AND DOVE

Jamie Barton (m-s), Quinn Kelsey (bar), Baylor A Cappella Choir, Isabelle Demers (org) / Alan Raines (dir)

Acis APL 55284 [53:03]

★★★★★

The Baylor A Cappella Choir is entirely new to me, but on the strength of this particular recording they have made at least one new admirer. The chief

'Rarely have I heard such a beautiful, calm legato line'

work on this CD is the Duruflé Requiem, given in its organ-only version. It is a piece hardly in need of yet another recording, one would think; yet this performance is such a special experience that it made this listener sit up and take note. Rarely have I heard such a beautiful, calm legato line from a choir in this work, in which nothing is ever over-expressed or over-emphasised. Some might find it bland, but for me there was in Baylor's delivery a genuine sense of the numinous that was most touching and honest. Top soloists too, and fine organ playing from Isabelle Demers. Of additional interest is the fact it was recorded in the Paris church where Duruflé was titular organist for decades. The Ešenvalds and Dove items – *Stars* and *Seek him that maketh the seven stars* – only add to the feast. Warmly recommended.

PHILIP REED

THIS ISSUE'S REVIEWERS

Early Music Editor
Rebecca Tavener

Organ Music Editor
Stephen Farr

Choral Music Editor
Jeremy Jackman

Chris Bragg

Rupert Gough

Brian Morton

David Ponsford

Michael Quinn

Shirley Ratcliffe

Philip Reed

Clare Stevens

▼ Alan Raines and Baylor A Cappella Choir capture 'a sense of the numinous'



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ORGAN MUSIC	95
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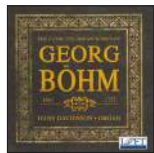
ORGAN CDS

THE COMPLETE ORGAN WORKS OF GEORG BÖHM (1661-1733)

Hans Davidsson, north German baroque organ (2000) copied from Schnitger, Örgryte nya kyrka, Gothenburg, Sweden

Loft Recordings LRCD 1133-35 (3CDs) [183:42]

★★★★★



In recent years, newly-discovered sources confirm that J.S. Bach studied with Böhm between 1700 and 1702, when the latter was organist and director of music at the Johannis Church, Lüneburg.

Previously, Böhm had spent most of the 1690s in Hamburg, where Arp Schnitger had recently completed his monumental four-manual organs in the Nicolai and Jacobi churches. For this recording, Hans Davidsson plays on the now famous Schnitger-style organ, tuned at A465 and quarter-comma meantone temperament, the result of a research project at GOArt, University of Gothenburg. No autographs of Böhm's music survive, and most of his extant music, consisting of *praeludia* and chorale-based works, stems from central German sources, most likely transmitted initially by Bach. This first 'complete' recording is research-based, involving a critical study of all manuscripts and editions, and informed by north German and French performance practices. Davidsson's playing is rhetorical and colourful, making the most of the plethora of wonderful tonal combinations available on Schnitger organs. Some of the *praeludia* differ markedly from the established editions, suggesting that the music is far from 'fixed'. Unfortunately, details of the organ and the registrations (advertised in the liner notes as 'on-line') were not available at the time of writing.

DAVID PONSFORD

N'OUBLIEZ JAMAIS!

Sylvain Heili, Roethinger organ (1914), Erstein, Alsace

Editions Hortus 733 [68:57]

★★★★★



Remarkably, this is the 33rd volume of Hortus's ongoing series of 'Les Musiciens et la Grande Guerre'. The present disc is a typically engaging collection of compositions written between 1914 and 1919, largely by French composers, but also including an unusually bombastic *Pièce héroïque* by the Dutch/German Gerard Bunk and works from the Anglican world: Herbert Brewer's *Elegy* and Healey Willan's *Introduction, Passacaglia & Fugue*. Sylvain Heili, a former pupil of Jean Boyer in Lyon and currently professor of organ in Douai, performs with great musicality and sensitivity on a particularly interesting child of the Alsatian organ reform: the III/64 Roethinger organ in Erstein. The organ sounds more German than French and is perhaps not a first choice for the Brewer and Willan (no big reed, of course). I was, nevertheless, charmed by the unusual clarinet (two ranks of flue pipes from treble G#) in the former and by the use of the Voix Humaine in the ghostly opening chords of the latter. The lack of a specification (a fascinating amalgam of French and German stylistic traits) and further commentary on the organ in the booklet is a real shame. Of the other repertoire I was particularly taken with the

melancholic 11-minute *Trauerzug* by the Leipzig composer Paul Gerhardt, about whom neither the booklet nor Grove cast any light. The recorded sound is somewhat claustrophobic.

CHRIS BRAGG

THE FIRST ORGAN CONCERTOS

Matthew Dirst, Paul Fritts & Co. organ (2010), St Philip Presbyterian Church, Houston, Texas; Ars Lyrica Houston

Loft Recordings LRCD-1138 [62:49]

★★★★★



This lively and imaginative CD comprises speculative reconstructions of concertos that J.S. Bach might have played on the new Silbermann organ in Dresden in 1725. As reported, Bach played 'preludes and various concertos, with accompanying soft instrumental music in all keys.' The concertos are known to us as the (later) harpsichord concertos BWV 1052, 1058 and 1053, preceded on this disc by Handel's 'Concerto' in D major from *Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* (1707). The close recording places us inside the instrumental group of single strings and theorbo/baroque guitar, enabling every detail to be heard.

Lovely playing!

DAVID PONSFORD

DANCES AND CHANSONS OF THE FRENCH RENAISSANCE

Robert Bates, Saint-Pierre, Saint-Julien-du-Sault, Burgundy (1568 organ, reconstructed by Bertrand Cattiaux, 2012)

Loft Recordings LRCD-1137 [60:11]

★★★★★



The publications of Pierre Attaignant from 1531 are some of the most important in the history of keyboard music, although the original arranger of the keyboard versions is unknown. Robert Bates has focused on the secular pieces, recording 40 chansons, branles, gaillardes and basse dances on a reconstructed 15-stop French renaissance organ in quarter-comma meantone temperament, together with added percussion instruments. With so many short pieces, Bates's registrations are well varied and played with lively tempi, bold articulation and virtuoso embellishments, and the liner notes place the publications in their historical context. A fine collaboration between musicology, performance and historically-sensitive organ building.

DAVID PONSFORD

PADRE ANTONIO SOLER: SIX CONCERTOS FOR TWO ORGANS

Jürgen Essl and Jeremy Joseph, Joseph Fr. Nassarre Cimirra organs (1735), Mexico City Cathedral

Cybele SACD 031802 [53:40]

★★★★★



The organs of Mexico's Catedral Metropolitana are unique. The largest pair of Spanish-style instruments to survive anywhere and the largest baroque organs on the American continent, they were created for this vast space in 1735/6 by

Zaragossa-born Joseph Nassarre Cimirra. Following a restoration in

the 1970s by D.A. Flentrop, always considered unsatisfactory, they have now been re-restored by Gerhard Grenzing and are shown off to extraordinary advantage by Jürgen Essl and South African-born Viennese organist Jeremy Joseph in this recording of Soler's mildly barmy concertos. The instruments are sophisticated, subtle and hugely colourful, with antiphonal and echo effects made possible not just by their spatial separation, but by the small echo (swell) devices and the stops in the rear façades sending sound backwards into the aisles running parallel to the chancel. Essl and Joseph's creativity and brilliant ensemble playing, together with the sixth-comma meantone tuning (and the organs are perfectly in tune!) make this a joy to listen to. Who, ultimately, could resist those chamades blazing their way through the 'Emperor's Fanfare'? This is really a lot of fun, the excellent photography partly making up for the rather stingy 53 minutes of music.

CHRIS BRAGG

ANTONIO DE CABEZÓN: TIENTOS, DIFERENCIAS Y GLOSADAS

Léon Berben, St Andreas, Soest-Ostönnen, Germany (anon, c.1425)
Aeolus AE 11171 [78:45]

★★★★★



One of the greatest privileges of 2018 was the opportunity to perform a recital on the organ now thought to be the oldest in the world, at Ostönnen in Westphalia, dated, through dendrochronological analysis of the wind-chest, to

around 1425. Originally built for a much larger church in nearby Soest, the intensity of sound produced by the centuries-old lead pipework is overwhelming. Here, Léon Berben performs Antonio Cabezón, whose mercurial music predates the archetypal division of the Iberian keyboard so essential for the music of, for example, Correa de Arauxo. At a time when geographical characteristics were much less prominent, the match between organ and music here is convincing, and Berben must be commended especially for his fluent and brilliant ornamentation and passagework on a somewhat agricultural action. An interesting detail here is the tuning: Harald Vogel's interpretation of Arnold Schlick's proposal in his 1511 treatise, often cited as a first step from Pythagorean tuning towards quarter-comma meantone. Cabezón's music resolves both triadically and on the fifth/octave, so perhaps the parallel is apt if not justified in a purely historical or geographical sense. This is beautifully presented and performed, the sound of the organ unforgettable.

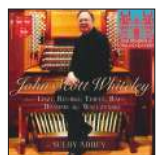
CHRIS BRAGG

JOHN SCOTT WHITELEY PLAYS LISZT, REUBKE, THEILE, RAFF, BRAHMS & WALCZYNSKI

John Scott Whiteley, Selby Abbey

Selby Abbey Organ Masters SAOM 002 [69:52]

★★★★★



This year Selby Abbey celebrates its 950th anniversary and this is the second CD release to celebrate the Abbey and its fine Hill organ of 1909 (recently restored). The first recording was a re-master of Fernando Germani legendary recordings on the instrument from 1962. Whiteley was a pupil of

Germani, and for this new disc he turns to the music of Liszt and his pupils and acquaintances. On this fine recording Liszt's epic variations on *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen* and the monumental Reubke Sonata sit alongside some unfamiliar works by Louis Thiele and Joachim Raff. The organ is captured beautifully on this recording with impeccable, intelligent playing, as ever, from John Scott Whiteley.

RUPERT GOUGH

L'ART DE LA FUGUE À ST BENOÎT-SUR-LOIRE

Vincent Grappy, Sals de l'Abbaye de Fleury

Editions Hortus 165-166 (2CDs) [67:52; 25:18]

★★★★★



Here the balance, perfection, proportion and mastery of Bach's *Art of Fugue* is reflected in the medieval architectural perfection of the Abbey of St Benoît-sur-Loire – as Vincent Grappy, titular organist of Blois Cathedral, says: 'It lends rhythm

to time.' You can certainly sense the music resounding off the ancient walls, as the recording does not capture the organ as closely as it might. The historic instrument, originally housed in Sainte-Croix Cathedral, Orléans and moved to Fleury in 1823, is certainly full of character, although some registrations are rather dense and obscure the counterpoint. Others are more delicately rendered, revealing wonderfully lyrical flowing lines from individual stops. A bold but successful venture from Grappy.

RUPERT GOUGH

J.S. BACH: THE COMPLETE WORKS FOR ORGAN

André Isoir, various instruments, recorded 1975-91

La Dolce Vita LDV400.6 (17CDs)



The late André Isoir, among his many musical testaments, left us a complete Bach cycle, recorded for Calliope between 1975 and 1991 with the toccatas re-recorded in 1993. While the present re-release on 17 CDs gives us the opportunity to reconsider these performances, it would be folly to judge them in the context of today's Bach interpretations; by now they are, definitively, 'historic'. More valuable insights can be gained by considering Isoir in the context of his background, the zeitgeist of the era in which the recordings were made, and the Bach recordings of other French organists of the time.

And that time was, of course, a turbulent one. Isoir, like Marie-Claire Alain and Michel Chapuis, emerged from the Paris Conservatoire culture of Marcel Dupré (in Isoir's case via Rolande Falcinelli) just as the purported line of succession from Bach that tradition represented was being questioned. In addition, Isoir, like Chapuis, had studied first at the École César Franck with the influential Édouard Souberbielle, whose own particular interest in earlier repertoire had been propagated by Joseph Bonnet. Unsurprising then that extended listening to Isoir's Bach playing, like that of many others of the time, reveals reactionary (rather than evolutionary) tendencies in the first instance. I sense a strong urge to branch out in a personal direction offset by the status of 'virtuoso' bestowed upon Paris Conservatoire Premier Prix winners, then as

▷

Acis

Beneath the **Incense Tree**

Music for Advent, Christmas & Epiphany

A Babe is Born
William Mathias

Gabriel's Message
arr. Lachlan McDonald

In Advent Heat
Peter Campbell

Jesus Christ the Apple Tree
Anthony Piccolo

A Lady that was so Fair and Bright
Owen Elsley

Es ist ein Ros entsprungen
Johannes Brahms

Behold a Simple Tender Babe
June Nixon

Away in a Manger
arr. Michael Leighton Jones

Nativitie
Daniel Riley

Softly
Will Todd

Silent Night
arr. Daniel Brinsmead

In dulci jubilo BWV 729
Johann Sebastian Bach

Ding! Dong! Merrily on High
arr. Malcolm Williamson

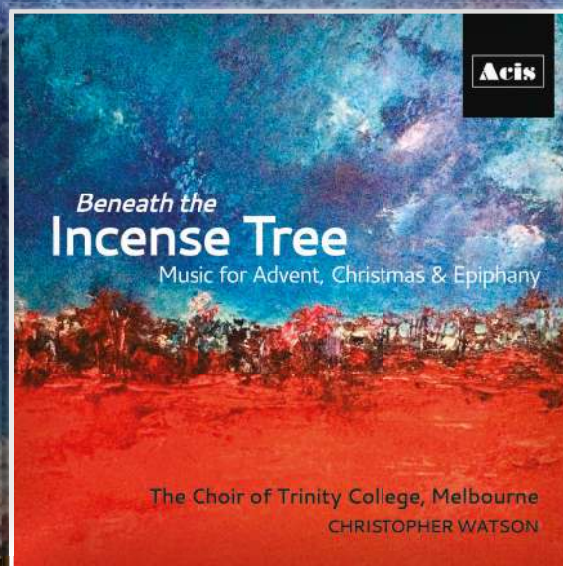
Balulalow
Francis Pott

The Magi's Gifts
Richard Allain

Coventry Carol
arr. Daniel Riley

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern
Johann Pachelbel

Angel Song
Dan Locklair



The Choir of Trinity College, Melbourne

CHRISTOPHER WATSON

GILLIAN McNAUGHTON & JACK LINDSAY
ORGAN SCHOLARS

acisproductions.com

◀ now. The music-making is gregarious; quick (occasionally to the brink of unstable), extrovert and sometimes expansively ornamented. In the later recordings in particular there is a greater sense of rebellion against the Dupré aesthetic than one hears in Marie-Claire Alain's earliest Bach recordings, made when Dupré himself was still alive. Isoir's articulation, for example, is far more active in the smaller note values than in the longer ones, whereas if one were more inclined to hang one's articulation around a framework of beat structure and rhetoric, the result might well be the polar opposite, not least to mitigate the ever-present risk of over-accenting. At its most carefree, Isoir's accenting can seem slightly chaotic (the little four-note repeated figure in the first movement of BWV 593 continually stresses the final quaver, for example). In terms of registration, certain habits are noteworthy and entirely typical of the time: the preponderance of mutations, rather than reeds, in solo lines; of gap registrations, often with a principal-scale mutations, in anything monophonic (the opening of BWV 533, 535 564, 572) as well as in the outer movements of the trio sonatas; the frequent changing of manuals in 'plenum' pieces (the heyday of the 'secondary chorus') and the pedal reed's lingering role as a 'climactic' stop (Anches Pédale!) rather than as a counterweight to the often very lively upperwork. This frequently has consequences for the balance; the pedal can seem muddy and distant.

The ghost of Dupré occasionally peeks out from behind the curtain nevertheless. The solo lines in BWV 590/iii or BWV 564/ii,

for example, are played almost *über-legato* and with barely a breath. The opening of the Canzona, for all the chuff and tremulant, is played almost completely legato, heels a-plenty in the pedal, the slower movements of the trio sonatas likewise. But there is a highly individual streak which keeps Isoir's listeners, even today, firmly in check. Why not get faster at the end of BWV 549 or BWV 566? Why not cancel Bach's own natural signs raising the B flat in the melody of 'Lob sei dem allmächtigen Gott' BWV 602? Why not repeat the Aufgesang of 'Der Tag, der ist so freudenreich' BWV 605, an octave lower? Why not add a continuo part to BWV 645 (like Chapuis) or divide the ritornello of BWV 650 between several different 'instruments'?

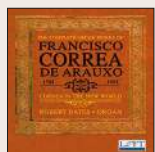
Isoir's choice of organs is likewise somewhat idiosyncratic. All by German builders, these include the spiky, and not overly attractive, 1970s Westenfelder in Esch-sur-Alzette; the more cohesive, Isoir-designed Grenzing in Saint-Cyprien en Périgord; and, especially interesting, the early Ahrend organs in Aurich (1956, a telling contrast to the dominant Danish aesthetic of the time) and Frankfurt (1975). The one historic organ, perplexingly, is Gabler's rococo masterpiece in Weingarten on which Bach's music was impossible until Kuhn's extension of the pedal compass in 1983. This organ is so completely different in style and playing experience as to oblige Isoir to adapt his way of playing considerably; it inspires some of his most considered playing, and a somewhat different approach to registration, with manual reeds more frequently to the fore. ▶

THE COMPLETE ORGAN WORKS OF FRANCISCO CORREA DE ARAUXO (1584-1654)

Robert Bates, organs of Oaxaca Cathedral, Mexico (1712), Santa María de la Asunción, Tlacolula, Mexico (1792), San Jerónimo, Tlacoahuaya, Mexico (c.1729), Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, California (1989), Mission San José, Fremont, California (1989)

Loft Recordings LRCD-1141-45 (5CDs) [3:56:15]

★★★★★



The early 17th century was marked by some of the most important publications of keyboard music in Europe: England – Byrd, Bull and Gibbons's *Parthenia* (1612); France – Titelouze's *Hymnes de l'Eglise* (1623); Germany – Samuel Scheidt's *Tabulatura Nova* (1624); and Spain – Correa de Arauxo's *Libro de tientos y discursos de musica practica y theorica de organo intitulado Facultad Organica* (1626). Over the period of 1997-2014, Robert Bates has recorded Correa's complete *Facultad Organica* ('Art of Organ Playing') on three historic Mexican organs and two modern Spanish-style instruments in California. This is the first time that Correa's *Facultad* (his only extant music) has been recorded in its entirety, and the extensive booklet notes reveal some of the considerable pragmatic difficulties that had to be surmounted (the playing condition of the historic organs, Mexican traffic noise, barking dogs, local 'church watchers', immigration and customs, and so forth). These alone make this recording a significant achievement.

Correa spent most of his professional life as organist at San

Salvador, Seville. His *Facultad Organica* contains 69 pieces, which he graded according to technical difficulty: *Tientos* for undivided stops on tones 1 to 12, easier *Tientos* for undivided stops on various tones, *Tientos* for half stops (*medio registro*), *Tientos* in 5 parts, *Tientos* in demisemi-quaver movement, pieces in triple time, an ornamented chanson and three plainchant settings. Of particular value is Correa's explanations added to individual pieces, as well as his introduction to the entire collection.

The organs are one-manual instruments with divided stops with wonderfully bold, colourful sounds and tuned in meantone temperament. In his notes, Bates compares Correa's music with El Greco's paintings in being fundamentally renaissance in style, but shot through with elongated twisting melodies, harsh dissonances, complex rhythms and extreme contrasts of note values. The playing is based on research into contemporary performance practices – ornamentation, fingering and registration – but Bates is disarmingly modest about his achievement. The recording, he states, 'represents only one step in the rediscovery of Correa's manner of performance.'

These recordings are about as far from conventional English organ culture as possible. Both the music and the instruments are a time-machine that transports us back to the early 17th century. Study of the music and these recordings will enable organists and scholars to better understand Spanish renaissance music and the organ culture prevalent in the Iberian peninsula and central America. Bates and his team are to be congratulated on this monumental achievement.

DAVID PONSFORD

◀ For the record, Isoir's 'complete' cycle has the added bonus of a 1999 recording of the *Art of Fugue* but only a fraction of the Neumeister chorales. As a whole, these recordings bear witness to the brilliance of a distinctive and individual musician, and the relatively low price renders this an attractive purchase for anyone interested in the impartial study of the era in question.

CHRIS BRAGG

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS: SYMPHONY NO.3 'ORGAN', TRANSCRIBED BY GUY BOVET

Ulrich Meldau, Kuhn organ (1951), Kirche Enge, Zurich;
Capriccio Baroque Orchestra / Karel Valter (dir)
Aeolus AE-10097 [53:25]

★★★



Guy Bovet has always been one of the most creative thinkers of the organ world. Here he transcribes Saint-Saëns's 'Organ' Symphony as an organ concerto with a pared-down orchestration. This to sooth the organist's 'guilty conscience as they take their bow together with the conductor, having played no more than a few chords'. It's a fun idea and the organ's interjections throughout the first movement and the scherzo raise an eyebrow. But I can't help thinking that from the opening clarinet and flute solos (transferred to the organ) to the piano duo, the work loses much more than it gains. Guy Bovet's cadenza in the last movement upsets a momentum already diminished in this recording by tempi significantly under Saint-Saëns's metronome indications, getting slower still with each entry of the 'fugue' material. While Ulrich Meldau plays brilliantly on the not-hugely-inspiring 1951 Kuhn organ, the Capriccio Baroque Orchestra sound a long way from their comfort zone (the repertoire advertised on their website tends to support this), with some sour wind and especially brass tuning adding to the discomfort of this somewhat eccentric venture. Meldau's transcriptions of Saint-Saëns's *Romance* op.37 for flute and organ, and *Tarantella* op.6 for flute, clarinet and organ, are much more enjoyable and deserve to be published.

CHRIS BRAGG

FANTAISIES DU SECOND EMPIRE

Emmanuel Pélapat (harm), Jérôme Granjon (pno)
Editions Hortus 155 [62:15]

★★★★



A trio of curios pairing harmonium and piano from mid-19th-century France prove divertingly entertaining and pleasing. A welcome first recording of Lefébure-Wély's *Allegro, andante et finale* (composed around 1850) finds its opening Chopin-like in sensibility and sonority with Gallic accents provided by harmonium, the finale as virtuosic as it is flowery. In Lefébure-Wély's arrangement, Saint-Saëns's *Six Duos* are variously feisty, fluid and voluptuous, Franck's *Prélude, fugue et variation* (c.1865) carries itself with a wistful poetry. Emmanuel Pélapat, on an 1889 Mustel harmonium, and Jérôme Granjon at a 1902 Érard piano, play with a relaxed rapport and elegant concern for detail, texture and tone.

MICHAEL QUINN

J.S. BACH: COMPLETE ORGAN WORKS VOL.2

Pieter van Dijk, Garrels organ, St Nicolaaskerk, Purmerend
DVH 1 40257 (2CDs) [80:08; 79:49]

★★★★

BACH: COMPLETE ORGAN WORKS, VOL.3

Pieter van Dijk, Van Hagerbeer/Schnitger organ, Grote Kerk, Alkmaar
DVH 1 40271 (2 CDs) [80:04; 80:24]

★★★★



It's tempting to imagine you can hear the separate influences of Pieter van Dijk's one-time teachers Marie-Claire Alain and Gustav Leonhardt in the

poetically robust and relishably direct performances on these two double-disc volumes of Bach. Volume 2 focuses on the *Orgelbüchlein*, with Van Dijk adopting an even-handed approach marked by sure, steady phrasing, nuanced attention to detail and a secure sense of architectural design, both within individual movements and overall structure and design. Start with the fluid, beautifully modulated F major *Pastorale* (BWV 590) for evidence of Bach playing of delicate distinction and a measure of the many pleasures here. No less attractive is Van Dijk's intelligent way with the double-fugue complexity of the 'Legrenzi' Fugue in C minor (BWV 574) or his gleeful flamboyance in the exuberant *Praeludium & Fugue* in G (BWV 541).

Interspersed with assorted Preludes and Fugues, the Leipzig Chorales take centre stage in volume 3. Van Dijk flows through each and all with a glowing sense of idiomatic rightness in colouring and attitude, adroitly framed by authentic-sounding Lutheran manners. Two fine, eloquent, German-accented period instruments – a III/39 Garrels in St Nicolaaskerk, Purmerend, and the III/56 Van Hagerbeer/Schnitger in Alkmaar's Grote Kerk – prove perfect choices, Van Dijk adapting to each with pleasingly nimble and sensitive musicality.

Booklet notes err on the side of brevity but registrations are provided and the recorded sound is excellent.

MICHAEL QUINN

REGER: THE COMPLETE ORGAN WORKS, VOL.5

Jean-Baptiste Dupont, Steinmeyer organ, Stadtpfarrkirche, Landau in der Pfalz; Link organ, Saint Paul, Ulm; Jehmlich organ, Stadtkirche, Pörsneck

Editions Hortus 163-164 (2CDs) [136:08]

★★★★



When it launched in 2012, Jean-Baptiste Dupont's complete Reger survey was only the second such undertaking on disc. Seven years on, it has been overtaken by *intégrales* from Max Schmeding (Cybele) and Naxos (various organists), with others – notably Gerhard Weinberger (CPO), David Goode (Signum), Roberto Marini (Fugatto) and Bernhard Buttman (Oehms) – snapping at his heels. In this fifth volume, Dupont homes in on the two Sonatas, the op.56 *Five Easy Preludes & Fugues*, and the 52 op.67 Chorales. Although they were composed

just three years apart, the creative distance Reger travelled between the First Sonata in 1899 and the Second in 1901 was considerable, the later work as magnificent and assured as its predecessor is eager and searching.

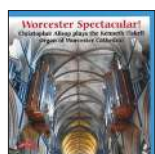
Dupont approaches the experimentation of the First with a fingertip delicacy that surprises with its aptness, blending its echoes of Bach and Buxtehude through cyclical forms with satisfying dexterity. The Second is afforded a more muscular (but emotionally contained) reading, its intricate architecture described with care, its pithy virtuosity voiced with liquid grace. Allowing himself a deal more freedom in the Preludes & Fugues and Chorales – not all of which are as ‘easy’ as Reger’s description of them suggests – Dupont finds a balance between the apparently simple surfaces of these pieces and their elaborate technical underpinning in a way that pays plentiful dividends throughout.

MICHAEL QUINN

WORCESTER SPECTACULAR

Christopher Allsop, Tickell organ, Worcester Cathedral
Priory PRCD 1214 [75:46]

★★★★★



Marking the 10th anniversary of Worcester Cathedral’s characterful IV/53 Kenneth Tickell organ, Christopher Allsop delivers an enjoyable array of popular favourites with contrast and colour aplenty. Bookended by Toccatas by Bach (a big-boned BWV 565) and Widor’s effervescent Fifth Symphony, familiar names and pieces are sugared by Pietro Yon’s dancing *Toccata*, Derek Bourgeois’s delicately sentimental *Serenade* and Percy Fletcher’s delectably dreamy *Fountain Reverie*. Allsop is at his most poetic in Bach’s meditative *Liebster Jesu*, and at his most dramatic in Sibelius’s *Finlandia* in Herbert A. Fricker’s lowering, variegated arrangement. The recorded sound from high-placed microphones creates imposing acoustics without ever sacrificing the pleasing intimacy of quieter tracks.

MICHAEL QUINN

FIREBIRD – VIRTUOSO ORGAN DUETS

Oxbridge Organ Duo (Benedict Lewis-Smith and Julian Collings),
Walker organ (1969; Wood 2002), Blackburn Cathedral
Regent REGCD 500 [64:46]

★★★★★



This is a really fine debut recording for the organ partnership of Benedict Lewis-Smith and Julian Collings. While Guy Bovet’s transcription of Stravinsky’s *The Firebird* is the main attraction, the Duo’s performance of Ravel’s *Boléro* is equally impressive, both in terms of the stamina of maintaining such repetitive rhythmic pressure for nearly 17 minutes and the incredibly imaginative range of sounds gathered from the Blackburn organ. The vibrant combination of organists and instrument in the rich expanse of this cathedral makes it all compelling listening. To complete the album is Stephen Paulus’s boisterous duet *Paeon*. Highly commended.

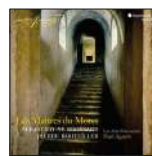
RUPERT GOUGH

CHORAL CDS

LES MAÎTRES DU MOTET

Les Arts Florissants / Paul Agnew (dir)
Harmonia mundi HAF 8905 300 [67:05]

★★★★★



The *Stabat Mater* by Sébastien de Brossard and Pierre Bouteiller’s *Missa pro Defunctis*, selected to represent the repertoire of cathedral and chapel choirs during the reign of Louis XIV, comprise a plangent feast. Nineteen singers, including seven soloists – voices of character in vibrant ensemble – plus continuo collaborate with grace, solemnity, elegant expression, sublime refinement, and exquisitely tasteful phrasing. There is some solo singing of ineffable sweetness and the performers give every impression of total immersion in early 18th-century French culture.

REBECCA TAVENER

THE UNKNOWN TRAVELLER

Fieri Consort
Fieri Records FIER 002TUT [79:29]

★★★★★



For their second recording, the Fieri Consort feature a selection of 16th-century madrigals from *Musica Transalpina* alongside an exciting, demanding and original new work, *Short Walk of a Madman*, by Ben Rowarth (settings of poetry by e.e. cummings), repertoires connected by the currently pertinent theme of crossing national boundaries. Glowing recorded sound enhances performances of sheer delight, with voices of exceptional quality and musicianship in enviably flexible ensemble. For Rowarth they produce a highly charged soloistic sound without loss of precision. As J.R.R. Tolkien said: ‘Not all those who wander are lost’.

REBECCA TAVENER

MICHEL-RICHARD DE LALANDE: GRANDS MOTETS

Chantal Santon-Jeffery (s), Reinoud Van Mechelen (haute-contre),
François Joron (taille), Lisandro Abadie (basse-taille), Les Pages et les
Chantres du Centre de musique baroque de Versailles, Collegium
Marianum / Olivier Schneebeli (dir)
Glossa GCD 924301 [78:41]

★★★★



Lalande’s 70 *grands motets* represent the high point of French sacred music during the *ancien régime*. Three outstanding examples – *Venite exultemus Domino*, *De profundis* and *Dominus regnavit* – are recorded here from live concert performances in the royal chapel at Versailles. Presumably for different performances, Lalande made multiple versions of his motets, although the first versions have been edited for this recording. Despite lively tempi, the performances lack precision in places, and there is scope for more clarity in the choral sound. The ‘blanket’ *inégalité* does become tiresome in fast movements – more awareness of the Italian influence on Lalande is needed.

DAVID PONSFORD

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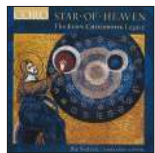


◀ **STAR OF HEAVEN – THE ETON CHOIRBOOK LEGACY**

The Sixteen / Harry Christophers (dir)

Coro COR 16166 [66:57]

★★★★



Motets by Lambe, Cornysh and Wylkinson are here interleaved with newly commissioned works by Joseph Phibbs (lush, lyrical, tender), Phillip Cooke (luminous, ethereal, yearning), James MacMillan (profound, substantial, noble, ecstatic), Marco Galvani (cool, astringent, mysterious) and Stephen Hough (shape-shifting, mistily impressionistic and brightly terpsichorean by turns), inspired by those earlier masterworks. Some individual singers make outstanding contributions and, although not everything nor everyone is fabulous, here is a very fine, thought-provoking way to celebrate over 500 years of one of the world's great choral manuscripts.

REBECCA TAVENER

WOLFGANG RIHM: REQUIEM-STROPHEN

Mojca Erdmann (s), Anna Prohaska (s), Hanno Müller-Brachmann (bar), Bavarian Radio Choir, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra / Mariss Jansons (dir)

Neos 11732 [79:47]

★★★★★



Anyone who considers Wolfgang Rihm to be the 10-minute egg of hard-boiled modernism, or post-modernism, should hear this. The delicate prefiguring (on oboe) of 'All flesh is grass', and by extension Pascal's defiant declaration of mankind as the thinking reed in nature, is evidence of a deep and thoroughgoing humanism in this extraordinary work. The oboe occupies an important part, allowing Rihm to explore ideas about sound and language and the inevitability of death adumbrated by George Steiner in his 1989 book *Real Presences*. Rihm's approach is unique, or at least ▶

**EARLY MUSIC****REBECCA TAVENER ROUNDS UP THE LATEST RELEASES**

It is often the case that a clutch of new early music releases evokes questions and even controversies about performance practice. In this batch, each uniquely beguiling, one is prompted to ponder 'what type of voice?', 'what technical boundaries?', 'how far to consider historically informed pronunciation?', and other, less fundamental, issues.

Female vocal and instrumental ensemble VocaMe explores sacred music from the great cathedral-building age in **Cathedrals** [Christophorus CHR 77420]. Their deep mezzo-sopranos allow for effective transpositions of polyphony originally sung by men, including the *Messe de Tournai*, and a glowing sound quality informs voices that feel very close within spacious, vibrant acoustics. Their programme includes a conductus from Codex Las Huelgas, which also pops up in an entire disc dedicated to that rich manuscript from Ensemble Gilles Binchois: **Fons luminis** [Evidence Classics EVCD 051]. With a more detached quality, and most elegant and technically impressive singing in radiant recorded sound, the performers offer fascinating and welcome new scholarship concerning the occasional liturgical combination of male and female singers. A century later, in secular society, Machaut was spinning webs of melody in love songs of sublime refinement. The Orlando Consort continue their outstanding survey of his work with **The Gentle Physician** [Hyperion CDA 68206], mustering all their usual commitment to the fine detail of text and ensemble. Stamina is also a regular requirement, here exemplified by the more than 23 minutes-long *tour de force*, the 'Lay de confort'.

The untamed interpretational attitudes of Graindelavoix may startle, but I admire their daring re-imaginings of performance practice for late medieval English polyphony in **The Liberation of the Gothic** [Glossa GCD P32115]. If you eschew portamento,

improvised ornamentation, dramatic tempo shifts, and characterful voices delivering individualised lines in this repertoire, look away now. Alongside two Marian motets by Browne from The Eton Choirbook shines a rarity – *Missa Ave Maria* by Thomas Ashwell. Love it or loathe it, Graindelavoix is attention-grabbing, thrilling and spicily sonorous. If they rasp and tickle the ear like the vocal equivalent of three-day stubble, the Tallis Scholars enter impeccably groomed with **Josquin Masses – Gaudeamus & L'ami Baudichon** [Gimell CDGIM 050]. Intense purity both of sound and purpose and a particularly fine bass quality for *Missa Gaudeamus* reveals (as one might a precious relic) the architecture of intellectual polyphony drawn in lines of sustained loveliness. Too polite? Might we wish for the guilty pleasure of a more unbuttoned approach?

The most rare discovery in the Marian Consort's programme of Portuguese polyphony, **Pater Peccavi** [Delphian DCD34205] is the wonderfully expressive music of Estêvão Lopes Morago, (born a Spaniard); but it is the gorgeous main work, Duarte Lobo's *Missa Veni Domine*, that showcases the true home-grown talent of a master polyphonist. The singing is as bright-toned, accomplished and shapely as ever, with a delightful appreciation of ensemble, but, as so often with UK groups, it is inconsistent consonant production that betrays their northern European origins – should vocal ensembles take more time to consider how the subtleties of enunciation relating to the music's source alters its soundscape? The performers are rescued from that 'local enunciation' trap in the next recording by being allowed to represent Italians away from home. The arrival of a new CD in The Sixteen's Polish Baroque series is always a cause for celebration and **Marcin Mielczewski** [Coro COR 16153] is no exception. Close your eyes and you could be in Rome as the *Missa O gloriosa domina* dances into your ears with vocal and instrumental verve: charming, sunny and vivid, slightly dry recorded sound notwithstanding.

Rebecca Tavener is a singer and director specialising in early and contemporary music. She is founder-director of Canty, Scotland's only professional medieval music group.

◀ novel, in creating a Requiem which is not so much a response to death and loss as a preparation for it. The Bavarian singers deliver the texts with a kind of numinous literalism, seeming to muse on every word, giving the whole an air that is part-ritual and part-symposium. A modern masterpiece, and (surely?) a definitive performance.

BRIAN MORTON

THE DARKEST MIDNIGHT – SONGS OF WINTER AND CHRISTMAS

Papagena

Somm Recordings SOMMCD 0189 [64:28]

★★★★★



Papagena is an a cappella group of five voices performing a diverse repertoire of music from across the centuries written specifically for female voices. This disc partly draws on folk tradition in some stunning arrangements of traditional melodies from Ireland, Germany, Ukraine and Norway. These mature voices are free from any vibrato and blend together with elegance, coupled with a fine technique. This winter programme includes music by John Tavener, Oliver Tarney and US composer Don Macdonald, whose *Fusion* enterprisingly dispenses with words

altogether, instead using arrangements of syllables. The harmony is flawless throughout the CD and the ambience is reflective and restful – there could be more variety of mood and tempo.

SHIRLEY RATCLIFFE

JÖRG WIDMANN: ARCHE

Marlis Petersen (s), Thomas E. Bauer (bar), Gabriel Böer (treb), Jonna Plathe and Baris Özden (child narrators), Chor der Hamburgischen Staatsoper, Audi Jugendchorakademie, Hamburger Alsterspatzen, Iveta Apkalna (org), Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Hamburg / Kent Nagano (dir)

ECM Records ECM 2605/06 (2CDs) [74:56; 28:08]

★★★★★



German composer Jörg Widmann (b.1973) is becoming better known outside his native Germany: for example, a residency at the Aldeburgh Festival two years ago and his championing by the Berlin Philharmonic and Rattle at home and on tour have done much to raise his profile. *Arche* (Ark) is his most ambitious composition to date: it is an evening-length oratorio, commissioned for the inaugural concert at Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie in January 2017, in which the

HANDEL: MESSIAH (ARR. STIAN AARESKJOLD)

Susanna Hurrell (s), Rebecca Afonwy-Jones (m-s), Samuel Boden (t), James Platt (b), BBC Singers, Norwegian Wind Ensemble / David Hill (dir)

Resonus RES 10219 (2CDs) [68:28; 73:47]

★★★★★

HANDEL: MESSIAH

Jennifer O'Loughlin (s), Diana Moore (a), Nicholas Phan (t), Sidney Outlaw (b), Concert Artists of Baltimore Symphonic Chorale, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra / Edward Polochick (hpschd/dir)

Naxos 8.573798-99 (2CDs) [69:51; 65:08]

★★



As Nigel Simeone points out in his fine liner notes to David Hill's recording, *Messiah* has survived numerous different approaches in its 370 years'

existence: from historically informed accounts recreating the forces used by Handel himself – and these could vary depending on circumstances – to Mozart's arrangement, to Eugene Goossens's re-imagined orchestration complete with a percussion section and made famous through Sir Thomas Beecham's recording. Stian Aareskjold's arrangement for the Norwegian Wind Ensemble is the latest version of Handel's indestructible masterpiece, here given its premiere recording.

Having been resistant to the idea of a wind ensemble accompaniment, and that ensemble includes, for example, a soprano saxophone (in 'O thou that tellest'), I must confess I was entirely won over by Aareskjold's approach within five minutes.

Even that soprano saxophone was extraordinarily beautiful as a concept and in execution. An experienced arranger, Aareskjold has, despite finding new sonorities to illuminate Handel's music, remained respectful of the composer's intentions. There's a nice conceit in using the NWE as the group was founded in 1736, five years before the premiere of *Messiah*. Their playing is exemplary. The trimmed-down BBC Singers are at their reliable best, relishing every phrase of Handel's masterpiece. The soloists are all relatively youthful, possessing fresh, bright voices, and enter fully into the spirit of the enterprise. Some of the alternative versions of Handel's arias are used – for example, the 12/8 account of 'Rejoice, greatly' – and the entire performance is steered with his customary authority by David Hill.

The Naxos recording hails from Baltimore, where music director Marin Alsop has enhanced the orchestra's reputation in recent years. One wishes that conductor Edward Polochick had slimmed down the numbers used on this recording. The professional chorus is generous in size – even if everyone listed in the booklet isn't singing on the recording, they still sound numerous, especially after having listened to Hill's recording. And the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra also present a heavier texture (especially in the bass) than we have become accustomed to in baroque music, even when played on modern instruments. Nevertheless, they do achieve some impressive results when accommodating Polochick's fast tempi, but eccentrically so in 'He trusted in God' or 'Let us break their bonds asunder': both are, frankly, a gabble and feel out of control. The four soloists are perfectly acceptable, though hardly outstanding, but each does engage in some stylish vocal decoration. In the end, however, it's not really a recording for the library shelf.

PHILIP REED

composer unequivocally signals his faith in the world's future. It's a big piece with big ideas (an exploration of the relationship between the human and divine) which perhaps inevitably divided the German critics at its premiere. The wide-ranging textual sources (Heine, St Francis of Assisi and the Bible, to name but three) match Widmann's use of parody technique in his music, which he has honed with great skill. If we think we hear Bach at one moment, then Mahler at the next, and then Widmann himself, then we'd be right: it's a bit like being presented with the entire range of German art music in one piece. This recording is of the premiere. Hats off to all the performers under Kent Nagano's forensic direction, and to ECM for making it possible. It's a terrific achievement for all concerned.

PHILIP REED

LEIGHTON AND MARTIN: MASSES FOR DOUBLE CHOIR

Choir of King's College London, James Orford (org) / Joseph Fort (dir)
Delphian DCD 34211 [63:42]

★★★★



This is a well-conceived CD. The pairing of Leighton's and Martin's double choir Masses reveals many underlying similarities between them, despite their being written 30 years apart – though since Martin consigned his Mass to a

bottom drawer, the two works were premiered within three years of each other in the 1960s. The Mass by Edinburgh-based Leighton is notable for its use of a variety of choral sonorities, especially pitting solo voices from within the choir against the main choral body. Martin's Mass is perhaps the more familiar to readers. The choral forces of King's College, London, are well focused, clean and expressive. Occasionally one or two of the solo voices show their youth, but the whole is delivered with such conviction, even passion, that this matters not. By way of a concluding voluntary, James Orford plays Alain's *Postlude pour l'office de compline*.

PHILIP REED

KEVÄT KERRAN ON KOITTAVA (SPRING WILL COME): CHORAL RARITIES FROM THE GRAND DUCHY OF FINLAND

David Hackston, Jukka Jokitalo, Juha-Pekka Mitjonen, Jussa Linnanmäki, Iris Roost, Meri Metsomäki (sols), Helsinki Chamber Choir / Nils Schweckendiek (dir)
BIS 2442 [53:11]

★★★★



There's something instantly appealing about a set of 'rarities'. You're unlikely to have umpteen recordings of them already on the shelf. These are also mostly miniatures, only one of them over the three minute mark and most under two, as sweet-sour and

unexpected as a cloudberry eaten in the field. Most of this material was written before the Russification of the Grand Duchy in the later years of the 19th century and prior to independence. There's no overt nationalism on show, just an inward-looking confidence and totally unaffected singing by the excellent Helsinki Chamber Choir. Obscure the provenances (some of them) may be, but this is a recording that bursts with charm, and perfectly pitched at under an hour.

BRIAN MORTON

THE SWINGLES: DEEP END

Swingles (Joanna Goldsmith-Eleson, Sara Brimer, Clare Wheeler, Christopher Jay, Kevin Fox, Edward Randell), RAF High Wycombe Ladies Choir, Kirsten Sandwich, Kiva, Clearly Vocal, Euphonism, Chantage, Sing SWell, Thomas Daniel, Vocalcity, John Taylor (pno), Edward Randell (gtr), Simon 'Smudge' Smith (upright, elec. bass), Matt Tovey, Joshua Blackmore (drums), Jon Cotton (arrangements, Wurlitzer)
Swing CD 25 [52:34]

★★★★



If you don't enjoy the Swingles, you should immediately take your own pulse or have a friend hold a mirror to your tasteless lips for signs of life. They are now, of course, not so much an ensemble as an institution and an academy of singing,

generously sharing the studio with various other choirs who must still be pinching themselves. There is even a spoken word cameo by the late Ward Swingle on Debussy's *La cathédrale engloutie*, which was arranged by and features a piano part by the English jazz musician John Taylor, who also died in 2015. 'CLYM', with the credit line Iain David McGeachy, might seem like an obscure source until you realise that McGeachy is John Martyn and the song is 'Couldn't Love You More', one of the three or four finest of the last 30 years. Thurston Dart told the young Michael Nyman that if he wanted to hear Bach sung as Bach should be sung, he should listen to the Swingle Singers, and there, right at the end is 'Two Sisters', Bach plus traditional lyrics. Miraculous.

BRIAN MORTON

PIER PAOLO SCATTOLIN: TRENODIA

Angela Beghelli, Angela Troilo (sols), Simone Maretto (reciter, English & Italian), Youth Choir Euridice of the Istituto comprensivo n.19, Lavinia, Fontana di Bologna, 'Euridicinni' Choir, Euridice Chamber Orchestra, 'Circe' instrumental ensemble (antique instruments) / Pier Paolo Scattolin (dir)

Tactus TC 941902 (2CDs) CD1 (Italian version) [53:03]; CD2 (English version) [53:54]

★★★★



Italy's Great War lacks the ubiquitous poetic presence of the western front, or even that of Gallipoli, but it inspired a body of writing that isn't limited to such familiar names as Eugenio Montale and Giuseppe Ungaretti, who belonged to the 'lost

generation' that lost its heart at Caporetto. Pier Paolo Scattolin's *Trenodia* draws on an eclectic body of responses, from Penderecki's choral music, to Ungaretti, to folk forms, to Ewart Alan Mackintosh's 'In Memoriam', written in memory of a Scots (?) private killed in the German trenches. Out of such apparently inimical material, he creates an astonishing fabric of sound, stitched together by drone strings, percussion both staccato and distantly rumbling, sudden outbreaks of passionate song. The singers are appropriately young and just the right side of raw. There is an English version on the second disc. It's useful enough as a reference, but it's the original that really strikes home, particularly in 'Trenodia 3 – Per non dimenticare / Not to forget'. Shattering.

BRIAN MORTON



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◀ **FRANCESCO BARTOLOMEO CONTI: MISSA SANCTI PAULI**

Adriána Kalafszky (s), Péter Bárány (c-t), Zoltán Megyesi (t), Thomas Dolié (b), Lóránt Najbauer (b), Purcell Choir, Orfeo Orchestra / György Vashegyi (dir)
Glossa GCD 924004 [67:25]

★★★★★



Born in Florence, Conti (c.1681-1732) was a notable composer of his time. His *Missa Sancti Pauli* in G minor (1715) is a major work and an inspired masterpiece. The performing edition for this CD was made for the Orfeo Music Foundation

by Anna Scholz from manuscript sources at the Schottenstift, Vienna. A fascinating booklet reveals many questions, but

scholarship and intelligent deductions have made these editions possible – it has been well worth the effort. György Vashegyi founded the Purcell Choir in 1990, and a year later the Orfeo Orchestra of period instruments. This outstanding group of musicians, together with exceptional soloists, give a memorable performance of Conti's Mass; perfectly phrased singing and cleverly articulated playing allows this tuneful music to flow with pure enjoyment. An intriguing discovery in the Schottenstift score revealed two other pieces by Conti inserted before his creative setting of the Credo – an instrumental sonata and the motet *Fastos caeli audite*, both included here. The disc ends with an aria for tenor and strings, *Pie Jesu, ad te refugio*. This CD should be one of the highlights of 2019.

SHIRLEY RATCLIFFE

▷

CHORAL CLASSICS FROM CHESTER

Choir of Chester Cathedral, Andrew Wyatt, Rachel Mahon (org) / Philip Rushforth (dir)
Priority PRCD 1205 [72:16]

★★★

EVENING HYMN – MUSIC OF LIGHT

Norwich Cathedral Choir, David Dunnett, George Inscoe (org) / Ashley Grote (dir)
Priority PRCD 1208 [71:12]

★★★

THE TEMPLE CHURCH TRADITION

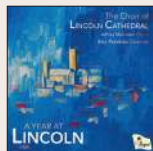
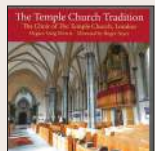
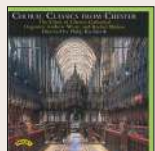
Choir of the Temple Church, London, Greg Morris (org) / Roger Sayer (dir)
Priority PRCD 1204 [74:31]

★★★★★

A YEAR AT LINCOLN

Choir of Lincoln Cathedral, Jeffrey Makinson (org) / Aric Prentice (dir)
Regent REGCD 532 [76:12]

★★★★★



I'm always amazed at the number of CDs emanating from cathedrals and the programming ingenuity that is shown presenting grassroots repertoire, often with a few twists thrown in. A recording is important to the history of the cathedral, and the advent of girls' choirs is adding to that history.

The **Chester** performances are proficient, with some fine solo work from within the choir's ranks. On this CD the choir comes more alive when the men and girls are performing together. The standout tracks for me are a wonderfully dramatic performance of Stanford's *For lo, I raise up* and Philip Moore's *All wisdom comes from the Lord* – Moore's writing always seems to bring out some

of the best singing from cathedral choirs. Other pieces to savour include a celebratory anthem from Malcolm Boyle and works by Bairstow, Elgar and Howells.

Based on the Evening Services, the **Norwich** disc focuses on the theme of light. Sacred light has an ethereal quality and the cathedral has more than lively acoustics: with a powerful choir, and an occasional too fast tempo, the beauty within the phrases can be lost in a welter of sound, particularly noticeable in works by Joubert, Tallis, Lauridsen and Brahms. The standout track is the full choir performing *Viri Galilaei* by Patrick Gowers – beautifully effective writing with a rippling organ duet accompaniment. Also of particular interest is Jonathan Dove's *Vast Ocean of Light*: contemplating the cosmos, Dove achieves a sense of timelessness and space in his music.

The richly voiced young choristers of the Choir of the **Temple Church** are a joy to listen to, their unison singing nothing short of miraculous, and Roger Sayers draws from his singers outstanding phrasing and subtle nuances of tone. This cleverly devised programme is a must for any lover of choral singing: you can dip into Fauré's *Messe basse*, Patrick Hadley's uncluttered *I sing of a maiden*, Bach's *Four Advent Chorales* from the *Orgelbüchlein*, and works by Reger, Britten, Ireland, Ridout and Purcell. In a programme of fine writing, Kenneth Leighton's two-part *Easter Sequence* for organ and trumpet is a lesson in originality. Greg Morris is a master of the beautiful Harrison & Harrison organ and his playing is a joy to hear.

Regent continues its 'A year at...' series around British cathedrals with Lincoln. Starting in Advent, we are taken through the church's liturgical year in repertoire that has links with the cathedral. The choir's strength is its beautiful singing of polyphony, in works by Byrd, Parsons, Tallis and Taverner. It is clear that both boy and girl choristers are receiving excellent training, and Aric Prentice steers his choir through some lovely performances. Newer works by Bob Chilcott and Judith Bingham stand out, while Patrick Hawes's commissioned piece, *My dearest wish*, signals its intent. Old favourites from S.S. Wesley, Mendelssohn and Brahms add variety. The CD ends with a rousing performance of Vaughan Williams's 'Let all the world' from the *Five Mystical Songs*.

SHIRLEY RATCLIFFE

◀ WILL TODD: PASSION MUSIC; JAZZ MISSA BREVIS

Shaneeka Simon (sol), Helen Lacey (s), Ben Tomlin (bar), St Martin's Voices, Will Todd Ensemble, John Turville (pno) / Will Todd (dir)
Signum Classics SIGCD 0563 [77:35]

★★★



Jazz and liturgical music have long and fruitfully worked together: one thinks of Duke Ellington's *Sacred Concerts*, Mary Lou Williams's Masses and works by Leonard Bernstein and Dave Brubeck.

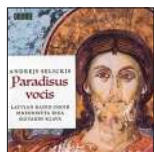
Todd is a natural and very confident successor, who wisely avoids the practice of putting 'operatic' voices into jazz contexts. Shaneeka Simon would sound just as confident singing Broadway material and the St Martin's Voices, for whom *Passion Music* was written, deliver the familiar words – John 3:16, 13:34, 15:13, the *Stabat Mater*, the *Seven Last Words* and the Mass texts themselves – with what can only be described as relaxed reverence. John Turville's easy but disciplined swing is also an important element. The *Missa Brevis*, written for Portsmouth Cathedral, probably works better in concert and CD than for the Eucharist, but it's a lovely piece and not without drama. Four other sacred songs fill out the record, but could easily have been dispensed with.

BRIAN MORTON

ANDREJS SELICKIS: PARADISCUS VOCIS AND OTHER CHORAL WORKS

Latvian Radio Choir, Sinfonietta Riga / Sigurds Kļava (dir)
Ondine ODE 1327-2 [60:22]

★★★★★



Andrejs Selickis (b.1960) was a pupil of Pärt. His music occupies the same kind of religious territory as that of his great mentor, with lots of references to Byzantine sacred chant, Orthodox religious music and so on. Indeed, anyone who loves John Tavener's music is likely find this CD of interest. Selickis and conductor Sigurds Kļava have collaborated since 2012 and this CD is the first entirely devoted to Selickis's music. The composer couldn't wish for more sympathetic interpreters: throughout, the Latvian Radio Choir produce their renowned, seemingly effortless sound, honed by Kļava for the last quarter of a century, to great effect, while the disc as a whole offers the listener something of a meditative experience.

PHILIP REED

SERGEI RACHMANINOV: ALL-NIGHT VIGIL

Agnieszka Rehlis (m-s), Rafał Bartmiński (t), Krzysztof Drugow (b), Choir of Podlasie Opera and Philharmonic / Violetta Bielecka (dir)
Dux 1404 [55:13]

★★★



For some, the *All-Night Vigil* is a pinnacle of Russian church music. For others, taking a cue from the composer, it consists of 'counterfeits', got up in plainchant forms by a composer who no longer believed, or was no longer observant.

Exactly as she should, Violetta Bielecka leaves the question open, as one must always leave the question open when performing

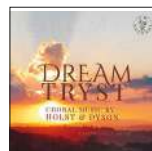
Shostakovich. Rachmaninov's work was first performed to help the Russian war effort in 1915 and it has an intriguingly bracing air in this new interpretation, which won't be to every taste but which scores high for bright, accurate singing (full marks to the soloists) and sympathetic accompaniment.

BRIAN MORTON

DREAM TRYST – CHORAL MUSIC BY HOLST AND DYSON

Godwine Choir, Matthew Jorysz (org) / Alex Davan Wetton and Edward Hughes (dirs)
EM Records EMR CD 049 [51:48]

★★★



A dedicated educator, Sir George Dyson was popular in his day, but listening to his cleverly constructed part-songs is rather like travelling back in a time machine. Holst's creative music stands the test of time better: his *Welsh Folk Songs* are masterly

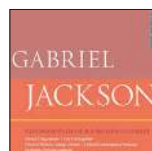
for their uncluttered arrangements that maintain the essential simplicity of folk music, and his *Five Part-songs* are contrasted pieces that the singers respond well to. The Godwine Choir is a capable group of singers whose performances are lively, but somewhat lacking in depth. The disc features premiere recordings of Dyson's *The Seekers*, 'Reveille' from *Three Songs of Courage*; Holst's *Love is Enough*; and Dyson's *Nocturne*, *The Moon* and *I Loved a Lass*.

SHIRLEY RATCLIFFE

GABRIEL JACKSON: THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Emma Tring (s), Guy Cutting (t), Choir of Merton College, Oxford, Oxford Contemporary Sinfonia / Benjamin Nicholas (dir)
Delphian DCD 342226 [73:06]

★★★★★



Commissioned for Merton College's 750th anniversary, Gabriel Jackson's striking re-telling of the Passion proves to be modern, majestic and deeply moving. Cast in seven movements, it incorporates texts from the four gospels, Latin hymns and contributions from Merton alumni (T.S. Eliot, notably, in the effulgent finale). Soloists and choir eloquently weave through the shifting perspectives of this work of exquisite imagination with involving feeling, and the Oxford Contemporary Sinfonia take to Jackson's often surprising but always richly executed orchestrations with aplomb. Quite unlike any Passion you've heard before, it is a rewarding work, deeply sincere, immediately accessible and deserving of much wider exposure.

MICHAEL QUINN

▼ Benjamin Nicholas conducts the Choir of Merton College, Oxford



JOHN CAIRNS

ORGAN MUSIC

BEETHOVEN: FÜNF STÜCKE FÜR FLÖTENUHR, GRENADIERMARSCH FÜR FLÖTENUHR

Severin Zöhrer (ed.)

Carus Verlag 18.013, €18.50

PETER WARLOCK: FOUR COD-PIECES

Malcolm Rudland (ed. and arr.)

Novello Nov165737, £5.99

ALEXANDER GLAZUNOV: COMPLETE ORGAN WORKS

Alexander Fiseisky (ed.)

Bärenreiter BA 11222, £25.00

DAVID SCHELAT: MANY AND GREAT – SEVEN SETTINGS FOR ORGAN

Morning Star MSM-10-053, US\$18.00

There are no great works among the **Beethoven** pieces in this new Carus collection – certainly nothing of the scope of Mozart's K608 or 594 – but plenty of charming ones. The informative preface sets the context for their composition (some were commissioned by the same nobleman who commissioned the Mozart works) and offers helpful information about the instruments for which they were composed. Only modest tonal resources are necessary (although of course the pieces can be as colourfully presented as the interpreter chooses), but even the pieces involving only the manuals need very neat playing of some deceptively innocuous-looking passagework. The most substantial work, the Adagio assai in F, is quite intricate, although of course passages could be re-transcribed if strictly necessary.

Warlock's **Cod-Pieces** – 'Dance', 'Orientale', 'Beethoven's Binge', and 'The Old Codger' – aspire to not much more than being entertaining. They're very difficult to play and the scores are littered with Latin tags and 'whimsical' performance instructions – in the absence of any editorial information that this reviewer is aware of, it's hard to make very much sense of it all, or to be sure what on the page originates with the composer and what with the editor. But then it's not really the sort of music where the idea of the urtext holds much sway. The editor supplies chord symbols 'to facilitate performance on an electronic single keyboard', which is novel. The whole enterprise looks like an elaborate in-joke, in on which one is not. Connoisseurs of self-conscious eccentricity will enjoy them.

There's some very fine music among the four works in Bärenreiter's new **Glazunov** edition – rather unaccountably, these are works which have hovered somewhat on the fringes of the repertoire. The edition includes two Preludes & Fugues (D major and minor) and the Fantasy op.110 (based on the Dies Irae), as well as a rather unidiomatic contemporary transcription of a piano Prelude & Fugue, which even with the most refined playing is likely to sound rather un-nuanced next to the original. There's enough in the three original works to make it superfluous – they're substantial and well-crafted pieces, among which the D minor Prelude & Fugue shines particularly. Text is based on previous editions of the works

from the 20th century, and the usual Bärenreiter critical apparatus is on hand. There's a fair amount of intervention from the editor, especially in matters of registration (where the mixture of languages used is oddly off-putting), but it's rather easier to track than in some other recent productions from the publisher.

David Schelat's **Many and Great** pieces use tunes partly well-known on this side of the Atlantic as the basis for liturgically functional meditations/elaborations/voluntaries – they will find a range of applications. There's a mixture of idioms on offer, and the pieces on 'Slane' (a gentle trio) and 'Lobe den Herren' (a perky scherzo-style movement) are particularly ingratiating. Technical difficulties are mostly modest, except in 'Llanfair', a slightly tricky toccata-style piece which will need some agile pedalling. Everything can be adapted to modest instruments, and only two manuals are assumed throughout.

STEPHEN FARR



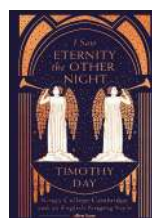
▲ Alexander Glazunov (1865–1936)

BOOKS

I SAW ETERNITY THE OTHER NIGHT: KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE AND AN ENGLISH SINGING STYLE

Timothy Day

Allen Lane ISBN 978-0-241-35218-2, casebound, 416pp + xvi, b/w & col. illus., £25



'Why did this small band of men and boys in a famous fenland town in England sing in the way they did in the 20th century?' That is the primary question Timothy Day sets out to answer in this magisterial but extremely readable book, published in time for the centenary of the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at King's College, Cambridge, which has made the sound of its choir famous all over the world, and for Stephen Cleobury's last carol service before his retirement after 37 years as custodian of that sound.

The essence of the English cathedral/collegiate chapel sound was defined by Sir George Dyson in a 1952 *Musical Times* article as 'the boy's voice', and he believed the men were at their best 'when they blend with that clean white tone'. Richard Millar, in a 1997 study of national schools of singing, noted that this straight, vibrato-less singing style characterised English solo song literature and early music as well as cathedral music, and expressed the opinion that one aim of employing such a style was to direct conscious attention away from the emotional content of the music.

Timothy Day's development of this thesis in relation to the King's phenomenon is one of the most illuminating aspects of his book. He sets it in the context of music at other foundations, making it clear that the celebrated 'unbroken tradition' from the glories of pre-Reformation musical liturgy to the present was actually

▷

◀ interrupted by long periods of decline. Credit for nurturing the skilled choirs of today must go to many individuals who were responsible for restoring standards from the mid-19th century on.

The line of succession at King's starts with Zechariah Buck at Norwich, whose choristers included A.H. Mann, organist of King's from 1876-1929. Mann inherited Buck's determination to convey the drama and meaning inherent in the music; his reign at King's was characterised by ferocious attention to detail combined with personal kindness, and it was he who forced the college to take chapel music seriously, despite the fact that the status of the organist was then perceived as distinctly inferior – it was not until 1889 that he was even allowed to have a set of keys to the chapel.

Day sums up Mann's successor, Boris Ord, as 'a man of the deflationary anti-rhetorical 1920s with anti-romantic aesthetic ideals

and aspirations.' An academic by training, he brought an interest in repertoire and contacts with the wider musical world to the job, but his introverted nature and reserved manner had an effect on his choir. After Ord came David Willcocks, the most famous exponent of 'The Sound of Kings' – the title of one of the best-selling LPs of his era. Packed off from Cornwall to board at Westminster Abbey Choir School at an early age, and a decorated soldier in the second world war, he was the archetypal 'buttoned-up' Englishman. Discipline and accuracy were his watchwords, and his aim was to maintain a consistent sound with unvarying tone quality, whatever the repertoire.

In conversations with Willcocks, Day himself was able to demonstrate to him, through recordings, that this sound did change slightly over the years, becoming a little more relaxed, with more variation in intensity; but it retained the qualities of dignity and



CHORAL SELECTION

TWO ANTHOLOGIES, TWO SHORT GEMS, AND WILL TODD'S PASSION MUSIC

Oxford University Press's new anthology of **Sacred Choruses** (ed. Rutter; mixed voices

and kybd/orch; OUP ISBN 9780193518827, £17.50) is designed to serve the needs of concert and ecclesiastical choirs. The musical items are mainly extracted from larger works, and where orchestral accompaniment is intended, scores and parts are available. Many can successfully be accompanied by a full-size organ with pedals, and a separate organ book with vocal cues (whose turned pages remain turned!) can be purchased – a very welcome feature of this collection. Is the balance of familiar/unfamiliar about right? Are the limits of country of provenance too tight? As John Rutter points out, the selection is ultimately personal. He also admits that the book is 'close to the limit of what singers can comfortably hold in the hand' – it is certainly not for the weak-wristed.

Like the editor, I hope that this volume helps to make pieces like Schubert's *Magnificat* and Vivaldi's exuberant *In exitu Israel* better known. I am personally less convinced by Rutter's arrangement of Lili Boulanger's *Pie Jesu*: the piece itself is hauntingly beautiful in its original version, but where choral humming here replaces the original string quartet, the soprano part lies uncomfortably high. However, any small cavil of this nature pales into insignificance beside the obvious desirability of this collection and the quality of the music between the covers. Furthermore, it is great value: 28 items for £17.50 – you do the maths.

Last Lullaby by Samuel K. Sweet (S sol, SATB (div) unacc.; Galaxy Music 1.3536, US\$1.88) features a truly striking text by Kathryn I.W. Sparks which begins 'Fall upward forever to infinite light'. The composer had the Sandy Hook tragedy in mind when he set these words. The musical language is contemporary, but not difficult (if you can manage Lauridsen, you can manage this) and beautifully complements Sparks's verse.

Carus offers us a volume simply called **Folk Songs** (ed. Mirjam

James, mixed voices, unacc.; Carus Verlag 2.214, vocal score €12.50), a collection of arrangements of British and Irish traditional music. Of the 21 items, those by Ravenscroft, Holst, Rutter, Britten et al will be familiar to many in the UK, but this writer is glad to make the acquaintance of, among others, Sebastian Krause's *Finnegan's Wake* and Jan-Hendrik Herrmann's *O Waly Waly*. Once again this anthology represents excellent value for money. The conductor's score (€24.90) includes a CD of pieces in the collection sung by the German vocal group Calmus.

Scott Perkins has written a lovely double-choir setting of W.B. Yeats's poem **When You Are Old** (SATB/SATB unacc.; E.C. Schirmer 8714, US\$2.23). The musical language is reminiscent of Vaughan Williams: the roles established for each choir in verse 1 are reversed in verse 2, and the choirs join together for a tender finale. The unusual ending will require one soprano to sing a controlled, sustained top F sharp; she will need technique – and nerve!

Fans of Will Todd's jazz-soul style will be delighted to learn that he has now written a substantial work for Passiontide. **Passion Music** (Female gospel soloist, SATB & 7-piece jazz ensemble; OUP ISBN 9780193523807, vocal score £12.50) is a 40-minute work whose musical idiom may be seen as an extension of that employed in his *Mass in Blue*. This is the work of a confident composer. The nine movements have at their heart a vibrant setting of the *Seven Last Words*; and Todd has the confidence to link these outbursts with his own text. The musical vocabulary is absolutely self-assured, leading us through a great variety of moods. The composer also has the self-belief to take old, familiar words and give them new tunes – 'There is a Green Hill', 'My Song is Love Unknown' and 'Were You There?' all receive complete makeovers of lyrical intensity. To make both rehearsal and performance a practical proposition, a complete backing track and individual rehearsal tracks for the choir can be downloaded. Next Easter, if not Bach, why not Todd?

After an early career as a freelance choral director and counter-tenor, Jeremy Jackman was a member of the King's Singers for ten years. In 1990 he resumed a career in conducting and leading workshops. He is currently musical director of the English Baroque Choir, and the Cecilian Singers in Leicester. www.jeremyjackman.co.uk

restraint that were so important to him and have continued to define the choir's performances under his successors Philip Ledger and Stephen Cleobury.

As a former curator of western art music in the British Library's sound archive, Day knows both the recorded literature of this subject and its printed sources inside out. His wonderful book is full of fascinating detail and shrewd insights. It concludes with a deeply moving chapter on the cultural and spiritual significance of the Anglican choral tradition, as exemplified by the singing at King's ... singing which even a spiritual free-thinker such as Peter Maxwell Davies considered 'a crowning glory of our civilisation.'

CLARE STEVENS

WEDNESDAYS AT 5.55: ORGAN RECITALS AT THE ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

W. Harry Hoyle

Clontarf Press ISBN 978-1-999685706, 230pp incl. 44 tables & 15 plates, h/b, £25 plus p&p

(available from YPD Books, www.ypdbooks.com/813_w-harry-hoyle)



This handsome book celebrates the 545 recitals given at the Royal Festival Hall in London by nearly 200 organists over 34 years, beginning in 1954 with the inauguration of the famous Harrison & Harrison organ. In colourless post-war Britain the 3,000-seat RFH and its 103-stop electro-pneumatic organ were visionary concepts, and the organ's designer, Ralph Downes, was well qualified to design the tonal structure. The idea was to produce a versatile, eclectic organ, suitable for performances of the best schools of organ music. As Felix Aprahamian noted, Bach's organ music at the time was more well-known to audiences in orchestral arrangements, but on this new instrument, the writer stated, 'Bach ... will be given authentic voice.'

Hoyle focuses on the instrument, the players, the repertoires and audience figures, as well as providing a context of English organ culture before 1954, when repertoire was based on transcriptions, and playing techniques dominated by legato touch, pistons and swell boxes. This changed with the Haarlem Improvisation Competition and Summer Academy, awareness of French improvisation practice, British discovery of authentic baroque organs in Europe, and research into historical performance practices.

Programme committees juggled with the dichotomies of established recitalists/younger players, standard/new repertoire, improvisations and transcriptions under successive chairmen. Peter Hurford's complete Bach Organ Festival (1980-81) was perhaps the most successful, whereas Ligeti's experimental *Volumina* famously fused the organ.

Hoyle's penchant for statistics reveals itself in 44 tables analysing all aspects of the entire series (although the organ specification is absent), and in the spirit of the RFH's mission to 'entertain and educate' writes short tangential essays aimed at de-mystifying organ and music jargon for amateurs. Critiques of individual performances are mostly avoided, but the anecdotes are amusing. Further research could produce a history of British organ playing in the 20th century, within which the RFH organ series would be pivotal.

DAVID PONSFORD

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PETER WRIGHT, ORGANIST & DIRECTOR OF MUSIC, SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL



MAGGIE HAMILTON

a lot of logistics with schools and parents, but it's worth it.

The pastoral side is also very important. One chorister from a very difficult background was a handful, but he had great talent and he clearly loved it. Years later, when he was about to get married, he came up, gave me a big hug, and said, "You know I had a really hard time at home. I want you to know that the choir here was the anchor, really a lifeline for me – it meant so much." So I feel we've done more for some of these children than just music.

Another highlight of being here is the wonderful organ [T.C. Lewis, 1897]. I never tire of it – I go and play all over the world, but I always come back here and think, "This is pure quality." One All Souls, they were doing work on the roof over the organ. We came in and started rehearsal, and the organ was making some very funny noises. The contractors had failed to cover the organ for the entire weekend, which had been extremely wet, and the organ was full of water. So for All Souls and the Duruflé Requiem we had little more than one manual working, a real challenge for Stephen [Disley, assistant organist]. I was brokenhearted. Harrisons did a wonderful job and it sounds as well as ever, but that was an awful moment.

There's a much greater footfall now through this area than when I arrived, and cathedral congregations have also increased over the last 20 years. In a cathedral you can explore your spirituality while retaining your anonymity. To go to Evensong, you don't have to do anything; like in a monastery, you can just let the prayer wash over you.

Throughout my 30 years here, I've been wonderfully supported by lay clerks, assistants and clergy. This has enabled us to achieve high standards and to convey the Christian message through the incomparable language of music – for, as Aldous Huxley said, "After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music." ■

Peter Wright retires from Southwark Cathedral in August 2019.

Our *raison d'être* here, like any cathedral, is not to do concerts, recordings or broadcasts – it's the daily Evensong, the wet Tuesday in February, which is as important as the big occasion: if you can sing the psalms beautifully with five people in the congregation on a Tuesday in February, then the big occasions take care of themselves.

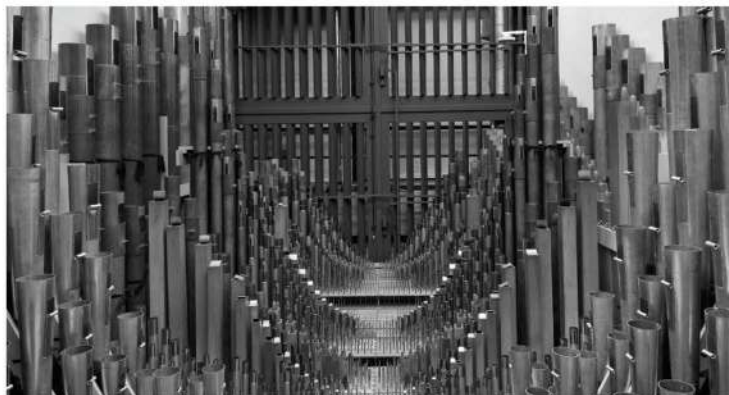
I came to Southwark Cathedral in March 1989, after 11 years as assistant at Guildford. I have less rehearsal time than most people, because we can't rehearse in the morning with the boys (they come from about 15 different schools); my challenge has therefore been to balance having a sufficient core repertoire which repeats – so the boys have pieces they can perform well and not just be struggling through new repertoire – but also to keep the professional men sufficiently challenged, with enough new repertoire that they aren't bored.

The girls' choir, which started in 2000, has been a major change, and has enlarged the musical programme. Apart from Sundays, the boys were only singing on Tuesdays and Fridays, so we've increased the sung services without taking anything away from the boys.

The girls and boys sing occasionally together, for example at the big festivals – they also sang in the *St Matthew Passion* under Trevor Pinnock at the Proms – but otherwise keep their identities. The thing I'm most proud of is that, despite having much less rehearsal time than other places and not having the benefits of a choir school, we've maintained a standard that holds its own against places with a lot more on their side. Apart from the Proms, we've done recordings, BBC broadcasts – quite a lot of big events as well as maintaining the *opus dei*.

The dedication of the choristers over the years has been remarkable. I remember that, shortly after I came here, there was a tube and train strike. I wasn't surprised when one boy was absent, because he lived in Highgate [six miles away]; but at 5.25pm he came in breathless – he'd walked all the way! It was remarkable, and I was very touched by that.

At Southwark, children can sing in the choir regardless of financial resources and background – with talent and commitment, anybody can be a chorister here. I've found it very rewarding to get professional standards out of children who wouldn't necessarily come from musical backgrounds. It involves



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